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THE WORKS OF

LAURENCE STERNE

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

LIMITED TO ONE THOUSAND REGISTERED SETS, OF WHICH THIS IS NUMBER 323

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John Hall Stevenson

THE WORKS OF

LAURENCE STERNE

VOLUME SIX

LETTERS

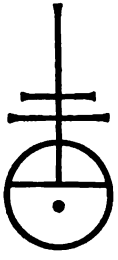
OF

LAURENCE STERNE

TO HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS

VOLUME I

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY WILBUR L. CROSS



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LETTERS

OF THE

LATE Rev. Mr. LAURENCE STERNE

TO HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS

165154

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INTRODUCTION

WERE I to please myself, I should write here a brief appreciation of the letters and miscellanies of Sterne that have been published since his death. But if, as it is said, good wine needs no bush, an essay of that kind would be a redundancy. Whim and sentiment, it may be taken for granted, alternate as delightfully in the letters as in *Tristram Shandy* or in the *Sentimental Journey*. It is likewise unnecessary to dwell upon the interest that the letters must have in considering Sterne the man; for the illumination is broad and clear. At any rate, a greater service may be performed, I think, by giving a connected account of the items that make up these volumes. Whence have been derived these letters, fragments, sketches, and anecdotes? — As so much that is spurious continues to circulate under Sterne's name, this is a question that needs answer.

Not long after Sterne's death, his widow and daughter threatened to publish the letters

that had passed between Sterne and Eliza —— Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, wife to a writer in the East India Company's service. They must have had in their possession a large part of this correspondence, for it was Sterne's custom to keep copies of his own letters along with those from his friends. Mrs. Sterne and Lydia were induced to withhold the correspondence, apparently on the advice of Becket, the publisher, and other London friends of Sterne and Mrs. Draper. But soon after her return from India to England, Mrs. Draper herself authorized the publication of ten of the letters written to her in the winter and spring of 1767. This famous sentimental document was issued in February 1775,* with a dedication to the "Right Honourable Lord Apsley, Lord High Chancellor of England." In a curious preface, which is reprinted in the volume devoted especially to Sterne and Mrs. Draper, an editor says that the letters were copied at Bombay with Mrs. Draper's permission. He had hoped, it is said further, to obtain her letters to Sterne, but Mrs. Draper was unwilling, out of modesty, to submit them to the

* *Lloyd's Evening Post* for February 20–22 quotes the sketch of Lord Bathurst.

public eye. The editor of this little volume of *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* was, of course, Mrs. Draper herself or some one directly inspired by her.

In midsummer of the same year there appeared in the London newspapers the following announcement: —

"*Speedily will be published,* Embellished with an elegant engraving of Mrs. Medalle, from a picture by Mr. West, (with a dedication to Mr. GARRICK) SOME MEMOIRS of the LIFE and FAMILY of the late Mr. LAURENCE STERNE. Written by Himself. To which will be added, 1. Genuine Letters to his most intimate friends on various subjects, with those to his wife, before and after marriage; as also those written to his daughter. 2. A Fragment, in the manner of Rabelais. Now first published by his daughter (Mrs. Medalle) from the originals in her father's hand-writing.

"Printed for T. Becket, Adelphi, in the Strand.

"⁂ Mrs. Medalle begs leave to return her most grateful thanks to those Ladies and Gentlemen who have already favoured her with so many of her father's letters, and still intreats those who may have any by them, to send

them to her Bookseller as above, (as speedily as possible) that they may be inserted in the edition now prepared for the press." *

After repeated advertisements of this kind, the letters and miscellanies — three volumes in all — were actually published on the 25th of October. The title was varied to "LETTERS of the late Rev. Mr. LAURENCE STERNE, to his most intimate FRIENDS. With a FRAGMENT in the Manner of *Rabelais*. To which are prefix'd, MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND FAMILY. Written by HIMSELF. And Published by his Daughter, Mrs. MEDALLE." At the suggestion of some friend, Lydia Sterne, now Lydia Sterne de Medalle, dedicated † the volumes to Mr. Garrick, "the man my father so much admired," and added "the sweet epitaph which proved Mr. Garrick's friendship and opinion of him." A brief preface assured the public that the letters are all genuine. Some of them, said Mrs. Medalle, had been preserved by her mother, and others had been furnished by her father's friends. Then followed the two poems ‡ in praise of Sterne that

* *The London Chronicle*, July 6–8, 1775.

† The dedication is dated "London, June 1775."

‡ See the first volume of *Tristram Shandy* in this edition.

have commonly been reprinted in editions of the humorist. After the introductory matter came the incomplete autobiographical sketch* that Sterne wrote near his death "for my Lydia," and 118 letters, if we count *An Impromptu*, forming part of a letter which was sent to Becket the bookseller in the Strand by a certain S. P., living at Exeter. The third volume concluded with *The Fragment* in the manner of Rabelais, which seems to have been uncovered in Sterne's library.

Very little praise can be accorded to the editorial supervision of these volumes, which was the joint work of Mrs. Medalle and the publishers. To pass by numerous misprints and wretched mistakes in French phrases, two letters are numbered XIV.; Number LXXXI. is missing; and a second letter appears as LXXVII. with a star. More unfortunate than slips of this kind is the helter-skelter order of the letters, especially in the first volume. The earlier Croft letters, for example, are out of chronological sequence, and they are all placed, though without dates, as if they belonged to a period before the publication of *Tristram Shandy*. Besides blunders like these, which

* See the first volume of *Tristram Shandy* in this edition.

may interest only Dryasdusts, there were deliberate mutilations, in which is clearly visible the hand of Mrs. Medalle. Fortunately for us, but unfortunately for her reputation, we have the original copies of two letters to the Jameses. In each case the letter as it passed through the post is printed directly after Mrs. Medalle's version, so that her editorial method may speak for itself.* The postscript to one of them reads as printed by the daughter: —

"I have just received, as a present from a man I shall ever love, a most elegant gold snuff-box, fabricated for me at Paris —— 't is not the first pledge I have received of his friendship. —— May I presume to inclose you a letter of chit-chat which I shall write to Eliza? I know you will write yourself, and my letter may have the honour to *chaperon* yours to India — they will neither of them be the worse received for going together in company, but I fear they will get late in the year to their destined port, as they go first to Bengal."

But as Sterne wrote it the postscript reads:

"I have just recd as a present from a right

* Consult Letters CXLIX. and CLXIV.

Honble a most elegant gold snuff fabricated for me at Paris — I wish Eliza was here, I would lay it at her feet — however, I will enrich my gold Box, with her picture, — and if the Doner does not approve of such an acquisition to his pledge of friendship — I will send him his Box again ——

"May I presume to inclose you the Letter I write to Mrs Draper —— I know you will write yourself —— and my Letter may have the honour to chapron yours to India. Mrs Sterne and my daughter are coming to stay a couple of months with [me], as far as from Avignion — and then return — Here 's Complaisance for you — I went 500 miles the last Spring, out of my way, to pay my wife a weeks visit — and she is at the expence of coming post a thousand miles to return it —— what a happy pair! —— however, en passant, she takes back sixteen hundred p^{ds} into France with her — and will do me the honour likewise to strip me of every thing I have — except Eliza's Picture."

Perhaps Mrs. Medalle may be pardoned for editing out the warm passages on Eliza and her picture, or the merry reference to Mrs. Sterne, who is coming post a thousand miles

to visit her husband; but why — to pass by minor changes — she should reduce "a right Honourable" to "a man I shall ever love," it is hard, says Mr. Fitzgerald, to conjecture.*

But notwithstanding carelessness and dishonesty in the editing, Mrs. Medalle and the publishers made a large and choice collection of Sterne's letters. Here are the letters that the young Vicar of Sutton sent to Miss Lumley, the woman he afterwards married; the letters of the Vicar, now the author of a famous book, to his friend Stephen Croft, the Squire of Stillington, descriptive of his doings in London and abroad; the reckless letters to John Hall Stevenson and to the London smart set, and the noblest letters of all that came from Sterne's pen, those to Mr. and Mrs. James, closing with that last letter — as he lay dying, his spirits fled, in Old Bond Street — to Mrs. James, "dearest, kindest, gentlest, and best of women."

In the mean time, an enterprising hack-

* The "right Honourable" was — if one may guess — Sir George Macartney, the diplomat: the "dear friend" whom Sterne felicitated later in the year on the success of his mission to St. Petersburg. For the way in which Mrs. Medalle mutilated her father's correspondence, consult further the correct versions of Letters CXXXVI. and CLIX.

writer had taken advantage of public interest in the forthcoming letters of Sterne to publish a volume of his own with a similar title. On July 11–13, *The London Chronicle* announced as published "STERNE'S LETTERS to his FRIENDS, on VARIOUS OCCASIONS, To which is added His HISTORY of a WATCH COAT; with Explanatory Notes."

"☞ Though the contents of these volumes," it was said in apology for the publication, "neither interfere with, or form any part of a work advertised to be compiling by Mrs. Medalle, daughter of the late Mr. Sterne, yet the Public may be assured of their authenticity, the whole being transcribed from the original manuscripts of the Author."

Besides the *Warm Watch-Coat*, which had been published separately six years before, the volume (not volumes, as the advertisement reads) contains twelve letters. The collection opens with Sterne's first letter to Garrick — "'T was for all the world like a cut across my finger with a sharp penknife," — which was printed from an imperfect copy; and then follows the letter from Dr. Eustace in America with Sterne's reply. The succeeding nine letters, with the exception of the one num-

bered five, are forgeries beyond any manner of doubt, though they were all considered genuine at the time, and some of them have found their way into collected editions of Sterne's works from the first to the latest. The forger, it is now quite clear, was William Combe, better and more honorably known as the author of the *Tours of Dr. Syntax.* Of the first and fifth letters in Combe's volume, Mrs. Medalle gave corrected versions, but, strangely enough, she did not include in her collection the two Eustace letters.

Five years later, a group of London publishers brought together — as it has been narrated in the general preface — "the scattered performances" of Sterne "into a complete edition." For the letters, they took the ten to Eliza, and 117 of the 118 in Mrs. Medalle's collection. The omitted letter was one numbered LVIII. to Mrs. M[ea]d[ow]s, dated Coxwould, July 21, 1765.* It may

* The Meadows letter first appeared in *The London Magazine* for March 1774, under the heading *A Letter of the late Reverend Mr.* STERNE. NEVER BEFORE PRINTED. After going the rounds of the newspapers, it was included with some minor changes in Combe's volume of 1775, where it comes fifth in the series. Later in the same year, it was again printed, apparently from a better copy, by Mrs. Medalle. She first gave it with the address to Mrs. M-d-s, from Coxwould, July 21, 1765, and with the final words of

have dropped out by mistake, but more likely its authenticity was doubted. Though it is indeed somewhat suspicious in look, I have thought best to restore it to Sterne. Besides giving details of the fire that burned down the parsonage-house at Sutton, the letter helps define a rather shadowy personage, the Mrs. M —— whose name turns up most unexpectedly in various parts of the Sterne correspondence. The publishers of the complete edition also reprinted the two Eustace letters and two spurious letters * from Sterne's *Letters to his Friends on Various Occasions.* And from some unknown source they derived an interesting letter,† wherein Sterne replied with spirit to a critical friend who had remonstrated with him for the free tone and manner of *Tristram Shandy.* It serves excellently to supplement the delicious letter on the theme *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.* The letter was admitted with some doubt; but it is, I

the greeting: "my dear Madam — and believe me ever your's." In his preface to *Letters supposed to have been written by Yorick and Eliza* (1779), William Combe claimed that he fabricated this letter. I think he was lying; else it must be supposed that Mrs. Medalle could alter her father's letters in a case where no motive is discernible. In this edition the letter is numbered CX.

* Nos. CXXIX. and CXXX. in Browne's edition (London, 1873).

† *Ib.* No. CXXXI.; No. XLIX. in this edition.

think, genuine. — I have thus accounted for the 132 letters in the edition of 1780.

Some endeavor was made in that edition to correct the errors of Mrs. Medalle. Especially noteworthy was the new arrangement of the letters covering Sterne's visit to London in the spring of 1760. In several cases a date was assigned to a letter that had hitherto appeared without any, and in a few cases the full name was given for an earlier blank or initial. But the work was done without system, and at times carelessly and ignorantly. The first letter to Garrick, for example, should be dated March 6, instead of April. To have settled this should have been as easy in 1780 as it is now. Again, a letter which was placed next to the last may have been written in the fall of 1759, when *Tristram Shandy* was circulating among Sterne's friends in manuscript or in proof. The latest date to which it could be assigned is the summer or fall of 1760. As it now stands, the letter hardly fits either year to the exclusion of the other. It has doubtless been tampered with, and it may indeed be spurious. The famous Latin epistle to John Hall-Stevenson seems to have been more perplexing than curious. Mrs. Medalle gave it

without time or place. The edition of 1780 assigned it to December 1767. It was written, as any one may see who reads it, by Sterne in the midst of noisy companions at the York coffee-house, and despatched on the eve of setting out for London on his annual midwinter visit. December 1767 is impossible, for Stevenson went up to London in Sterne's company just as the year was turning.* In addition to this, Hall-Stevenson is mentioned in the letter as somewhat above forty years old. He was born in 1718; consequently the letter must belong to 1758 or to one of the nearest years thereafter. The correct date may be December 1760. It cannot be earlier than the winter of 1760 if Sterne was telling the truth when he wrote to Warburton on June 19, 1760 that his correspondence with Hall-Stevenson had been interrupted for nineteen years. The letter to Lady P——, supposed to have been written in April 1767, has been placed back two years; and Sterne is thereby saved from the lie with which Thackeray charged him.† And finally — to

* Consult Letter to Mr. and Mrs. James, December 28, 1767 — No. CLXIV.

† No. CVIII.

be brief — Sterne's last written words, commending "my Lydia" to the protection of Mrs. James, were penned not ten days but only three days before his death. Mistakes of this kind, which have been allowed to stand in all editions of Sterne, have hitherto made it impossible to follow him closely on some of the most important occasions and triumphs in his social and literary career.

The example already cited — *Sterne's Letters to his Friends on Various Occasions* — was only one among several Sterne forgeries that deceived the public and the reviewer. Two months after the appearance of *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* came their counterpart — *Letters from Eliza to Yorick* — purporting to have been written by Mrs. Draper just before she sailed from Deal for India. In a preface, the usual anonymous editor gravely related that "these elegant epistles," which had long circulated in manuscript among Mrs. Draper's friends, were now furnished to the larger public from the most correct copies. The first sentence of the first letter — "I received your *Sentimental Journey* * * * " proves the forgery, for the travels were published a year later than the assumed date of the correspondence. And

yet so recently as last year a reprint of the little volume — there were only twelve letters — was announced in London as a biographical document of great value.

Much cleverer were two volumes that appeared in 1779 with the title, *Letters supposed to have been written by Yorick and Eliza.* The fabricator was that William Combe who had already palmed off a series of letters as genuine Sterne. In a preface it is admitted that seven of the twelve letters in the earlier venture were from his hand. The new letters, he is careful to explain, profess to be only imitations of Sterne that have been composed for the amusement of a few friends. The fictitious correspondence is assumed to begin after Mrs. Draper's return to India, and to close with a farewell letter from Sterne just as death was impending.

Sterne forgeries continued for some years in newspapers and monthly periodicals. The *European Magazine* for 1787–88 — to cite one further instance — admitted a series of more than thirty spurious letters. After running their course in the magazine they were published with additions in a volume entitled *Original Letters of the Late Reverend Mr. Laurence Sterne; never before published.*

Translated into French in 1789, they were thought by French critics to be of finer quality than the letters in earlier collections. "*Elles sont*," said the *Biographie Universelle*, in 1825, "*très-supérieures en élégance aux lettres originales publiées par Mme. Médaille.*" It now seems incredible that this correspondence could have ever been regarded as genuine; for it is little more than a paraphrase of the letters in Mrs. Medalle's collection with some faint echoes of phrases from *Tristram Shandy* and the *Sentimental Journey*.

It is a delight to pass from the forger and fabricator to Sterne once more. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for July 1793 published a letter in which the Vicar of Sutton is represented as having the hay of some "neighboring clergyman" publicly cried at his two parishes. Though the letter has as voucher only an anonymous correspondent, it is likely Sterne's. Unmistakably Sterne's is the series of thirteen brief letters addressed to a Miss Catherine de Fourmantelle, of which Isaac D'Israeli gave five in his *Literary Miscellanies*.* These letters have had a curious history. Miss Fourmantelle seems to have given them to a woman

* Edition of 1840.

named Weston, who sold them to John Murray (1778–1843), the great publisher in Albemarle Street. The second John Murray (1808–92) came across them among his father's manuscripts and edited them for the Philobiblon Society (1855–56). These letters, said to be in Sterne's own hand, are of very great interest. In addition to the sentimental episode that they depict — begun at York and concluded in London — they throw most light on the first days in Sterne's first London triumph.

An important Sterne discovery was also made by W. Durrant Cooper, the English antiquary. For some years he was auditor of Skelton Castle, Hall-Stevenson's seat in Yorkshire, and he thus had access to the family records. The result of his search in the muniment room was *Seven Letters written by Sterne and his Friends*, printed in 1844 for private circulation. Two * of the seven letters are from Sterne to Hall-Stevenson. Thackeray read them and professed to be shocked by Sterne's "blasphemy and scornful unbelief." A letter to Hall-Stevenson from M. Tollot,†

* Nos. XCVI. and CXXX. in this edition.

† Printed with the fragment of another letter in the *Anecdotes* of this edition.

a common friend who saw much of Sterne in France, gives a vivid portrait of the sentimental traveller and Mrs. Sterne in the English colony at Montpellier.

The letter Sterne wrote to Dodsley early in the summer of 1759, offering him *Tristram Shandy* for 50 *l.*, and the publisher's courteous reply declining the offer are probably forever lost. But Sterne's second letter to Dodsley, sometime in the fall of the same year, stating the substance of the other two letters and giving in some detail his plan for printing "a lean edition * * * at my own expense, merely to feel the pulse of the world," lies embedded in the *Reminiscences* (1836) of T. F. Dibdin, the bibliographer. To *Notes and Queries* for March 13, 1852, H. A. B.* contributed "an autograph letter" addressed to Mrs. Sterne from Paris some two months after Sterne's arrival there in the winter of 1762. In this little-known letter Sterne says that he is already speaking French "fast and fluent, but incorrect both in accent and phrase." For "three mornings together" he went to hear one Père Clement, preacher to King Stanislaus,

* Perhaps Henry Arthur Bright, the English man of letters, with whom Hawthorne made the tour of Wales.

and was delighted with his dramatic oratory. From this man, more theatrical in action and delivery than Garrick himself, Sterne doubtless added to his knowledge of how to win and hold the attention of a congregation by the devices of the stage. The correspondence between Sterne and Warburton, of which the eighteenth century knew only fragments, has been cleared up and completed by the additional letters in Francis Kilvert's *Unpublished Papers of Warburton* (1841). The letters of Sterne last to come into print are two of the four contained in the *Report on Manuscripts presented to Parliament by Command of his Majesty* in 1903. They were written by Sterne while in France to his patron Lord Fauconberg of Newburgh Priory. One of them gives an account of his severe illness in France in 1762, when it was rumored at Coxwold that the parson was dead, and all the congregation went into mourning.

Besides the letters of Sterne that have appeared in the collections and scattered places already described, many others were obtained by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald for his biography of Sterne. These new letters belong mostly to the pre-Shandean period, while Sterne was liv-

ing at Sutton. Two of them (now preserved in the British Museum) are addressed to Francis Blackburne, Archdeacon of Cleveland, complaining of bad treatment by his uncle, Jaques Sterne, who attempted to keep him from taking the turns of others at preaching in the York minster. Then there is a long letter to his uncle in which Sterne justifies his conduct towards his mother. A copy of this letter, once the property of Mr. Godfrey Borvik of Gunthwaite, was purchased in 1851 by Mr. Robert Cole of Upper Norton Street, by whom some one was permitted to make a second copy, — the one now in the British Museum. From a Mr. Hoggard of York were obtained many years ago copies of three letters that Sterne wrote to Robert Hay Drummond, Archbishop of York, two from France in 1762, and one from Coxwold just after his return. The last of these contains a new version of Yorick's preaching at the ambassador's chapel in Paris. And in keeping with the "hay" letter — and thus going far to attest its authenticity — is a group of several letters that were placed in Mr. Fitzgerald's hands by Mr. Hudson of York. Most of them are un-

dated, but they all belong to the ten years before the publication of *Tristram Shandy*. If they have not the finished literary qualities of some of the others, they best tell what Sterne was doing at Sutton and York in those days. Of individual letters that Mr. Fitzgerald gathered here and there, the most recklessly Shandean is the one Sterne wrote in March 1760 to Mr. Berrenger, the Master of the Horse, requesting his aid in inducing Hogarth to furnish an illustration "to clap at the Front of my next Edition of Shandy."

Without Mr. Fitzgerald's kind permission "to use my Sterne life in any way that suits you," I could not have brought together so large a number of letters. I have, however, found the book somewhat difficult to manage, for Mr. Fitzgerald has a way of giving for his purposes only the gist of a letter. This custom of his has rendered it necessary to go to all the available manuscripts. From the Collection of Autograph Letters formed by Alfred Morrison were taken the two letters numbered respectively LXXX. and XCIV., and the corrected version of Letter CXVII. Various manuscripts in the British Museum have been transcribed for the original text of two

letters to Mr. and Mrs. James (Nos. CXLIX. and CLXIV.) and one to Panchaud (No. CXXXVI.), and for the letters bearing the following numbers, — V., VII., VIII., LXV., and LXXXVIII. With few or no changes, I have reprinted from Mr. Fitzgerald the letters numbered VI., IX.–XIX., XXI., XL., XLI., LXVI., LXXXIV., CI., CXXXII., CXXXIII., CLIX. (the second version). And from Mr. Fitzgerald I received directly the letter numbered CXIII.*

It has not been a part of my plan to annotate in detail the letters brought together in these volumes. The notes to the edition of 1780 have indeed been retained for the most part, and a few others have been added. But after revising the chronology of the letters, I have given my main attention to an attempt at restoring the proper names that were left blank in the early collections or were indicated there by initials, or only by a line of stars, each one of which, it would seem, was intended to stand for a letter in the real name. Restoration was quite easy in some cases, and

* According to Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes* (Vol. VIII. p. 343), there existed early in the nineteenth century a correspondence between Sterne and the Rev. Daniel Watson. Nothing has since been heard of it.

in others it was quite difficult or even impossible. "S—— C——, Esq.," is of course Stephen Croft, Esq., and I think that Lady P. is Lady Percy without much doubt. But who is "Sir W.," or "The Earl of——"? I should like to know, too, who was a certain Mr. B——* to whom Sterne refers as the only "friend or connection" he ever forfeited. Was it Mr. John Blake of York; and did the Vicar of Sutton meddle with the matrimonial affairs of a brother in the cloth to the loss of friendship? Since conjecture must thus play an important part along with certainty, it has seemed best to enclose within brackets all additions to the text.

Directly after the body of the letters have been placed four short pieces, of which three are commonly included in editions of Sterne. *The History of a Good Warm Watch-Coat* belongs to the Sutton period just before the appearance of *Tristram Shandy*, though it may not have been printed till 1769. Its original title ran *A Political Romance addressed to ——, Esq., of York.* It is, as it were, a connecting link between the personal paragraphs Sterne contributed to the newspapers and the larger

* Letter LIV.

compass of satire in the first volumes of *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne is still the local wit, without a suggestion of the coming cosmopolitan, — the wit of the York coffee-house and of clerical dinners. In the amusing allegory appears Trim the Sexton, a name Sterne was soon to transfer to a famous corporal. *The Fragment* in the manner of Rabelais, which Mrs. Medalle found among her father's papers and published with the correspondence, is evidently a digression written for *Tristram Shandy* — perhaps for the fourth volume — but thrown aside for some reason. Dr. Homenas, who stole a sermon from Dr. Clarke, Dean of Exeter, is of course the Dr. Homenas in *Shandy* who asks Yorick to run over his notes for a sermon to be preached at court next Sunday. He is likewise a figurehead for Sterne himself. The *Impromptu*, which a certain S. P. sent to Becket, the publisher, from Exeter for the letters and miscellanies of 1775, is likely genuine, though it is of little account except as an example of what Sterne could do when "thoroughly soused." It has always been printed as a part of the correspondence; but not being a letter, it should go with the fragments.

The fancy addressed to a Mr. Cook, which

I have called *A Dream*, was first printed by M. Paul Stapfer in his *Laurence Sterne* (1870). The manuscript was obtained for him by a "vice-principal" of Elizabeth College in the Isle of Guernsey, from "a lady" at York, who could not remember how she came by it. Though there is no signature to the manuscript, Stapfer believed the hand to be Sterne's. The fragment is a fantastic whim, which was suggested to its author by "a very fine Spectator," wherein is related a story of Mahomet said to come out of the *Koran*. "The angel Gabriel," according to Addison's version, "took Mahomet out of his bed one morning to give him a sight of all things in the seven heavens, in paradise, and in hell, which the prophet took a distinct view of; and after having held ninety thousand conferences with God, was brought back again to his bed. All this, says the Alcoran, was transacted in so small a space of time, that Mahomet at his return found his bed still warm, and took up an earthen pitcher, which was thrown down at the very instant that the Angel Gabriel carried him away, before the water was all spilt." * And this story is made a framework for speculations much like (even

* *Spectator*: No. 94.

to some paraphrasing) Fontenelle's once famed *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes.* Altogether the piece is very pretty. It may not be Sterne's; but it contains nothing that might not have easily come from him. Locke, Malebranche, and Pascal, who may be discovered in it, are all in harmony with Sterne's speculative temperament. And in one of his more famous sermons, he dwells with glee upon an "astronomical miracle."* The quaint poem with which the miscellanies close was sent to Mr. Fitzgerald by "the Rev. Mr. Scott, late the incumbent of Coxwould." It is reprinted here as an example of Sterne's versatility.

Nothing has ever been published about Sterne surpassing in interest and value the anecdotes contained in the first of two letters from John Croft, the York antiquary, to Caleb Whitefoord, the wit and diplomat. Before their appearance, there may have been doubt as to the ways of Sterne at York and Sutton. Now there can be no doubt. Anecdotes must be accepted, it is true, with some allowance; but in this case it must also be remembered that the narrator grew up under Sterne at Stillington. He was a younger

* *Sermon:* No. XVII.

brother to Stephen Croft, with whom Sterne went up to London in 1760 to see how the smart world was receiving *Tristram Shandy*. Isaac D'Israeli knew of the anecdotes and alludes to them vaguely in an essay on Sterne among the *Miscellanies*. They were also used by Mr. Sidney Lee in his sketch of Sterne for the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But they were not published until 1898, when they were included by Mr. W. A. S. Hewins in the *Whitefoord Papers*. Without them my essays on the Vicar of Sutton and *Tristram Shandy* would have lacked their most essential details. By courtesy of the Clarendon Press the anecdotes are here reprinted entire as supplementary to Sterne's own *Memoirs*. To them has been appended an extract from a letter* written by Richard Chapman, the steward at Newburgh Priory, to the Earl of Fauconberg, then in London, containing one of the rare glimpses we have of Sterne, the Curate of Coxwold.

Some credence may also be given to the stories about Sterne that circulated in the newspapers during his life and the years just after his death. To the *St. James Chronicle*,

* *Report on Manuscripts*, Vol. II. 1903.

for instance, a certain G. E. G. sent a letter dated April 10, 1788, enclosing another letter, which purports to have been written on April 15, 1760, from an acquaintance of Sterne's to a friend "in answer to some queries" "concerning Mr. Sterne." The communication caught the eye of Isaac Reed, the editor of Shakespeare, who clipped out the article and pasted it into his copy of the *Sermons*. It has come to my hands from Mr. W. A. White, of New York City. If the letter bearing the date of April 15, 1760, be a forgery, it is one of the cleverest; for it contains nothing that might not have been known by an acquaintance of Sterne's in that year. And granted that it is a forgery, it is certainly founded upon traditions containing some truth. To my mind there is little doubt that Sterne at one time just thought of introducing Warburton into *Tristram Shandy*, and perhaps in the amusing way that the letter narrates with graphic details. It may be, too, that some copies of the *Warm Watch-Coat* were struck off,* and afterwards suppressed for the reasons here stated. And the version of Mrs. Sterne's insanity is evidently the one that was given out for the public. A

* Consult also the letter of John Croft to Caleb Whitefoord.

reprint of the letter I have thought worth while as a Sterne curiosity at the very least.

Then there is that first biography of Sterne, of which only scraps have been published. It first appeared in *The Ladies' Magazine* for April 1760 (issued on May 1), from which it was copied into other periodicals. The version given here is from *The London Chronicle* for May 3–6, 1760. The author was Dr. John Hill, a literary hack and quack-doctor, celebrated for an "elixir of bardana" and various other herb medicines, "excellent beyond parallel." For his sketch Hill gathered the anecdotes then in circulation at the London Clubs about the Yorkshire parson just coming into fame; and in addition to this, he seems to have had recourse to some London friend of Sterne's — perhaps a Mr. Cholmley of Chapel Street, Mayfair — for information concerning Sterne's life in the North. As will be seen by the correspondence,* the biography nettled Sterne greatly. It contains — they are evident at a glance — many falsehoods, but Sterne never denied the truth of one of the anecdotes; and another anecdote of Hill's was taken over by John Hall-Stevenson for his brief life of Sterne

* See Letters XLIII., XLV., and XLVI.

prefixed to a continuation of the *Sentimental Journey*. Like the letter of G. E. G., this first biography of Sterne may be reprinted as a curiosity, if for no other reason.

It has also seemed best to include among Sterne anecdotes the passages, referred to some way back, in which M. Tollot gave his impressions of Sterne as he saw him in France. The anecdote in Dutens' *Memoirs* is also too good to lose; and Scott's story of the Yorkshire lady has long been the classic defence of Sterne's plain-speaking. This, too, is the place for the conversation at Drury Lane between Sterne and Joseph Cradock, Garrick's twin brother "in personal likeness and mental power." And finally should come that last pathetic story, — the account of Sterne's supreme moments, as told in a simple and impressive way by John Macdonald, a footman to John Crawford of Errol, one of the wildest among Sterne's companions: "I went into the room," says the footman sent from a dinner-party to Sterne's lodgings, "and he was just a-dying. I waited ten minutes; but in five he said, 'Now it is come!' He put up his hand as if to stop a blow, and died in a minute."

W. L. C.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

It has been my aim to bring the text of these *Letters and Miscellanies* as close to what Sterne actually wrote as might be with the material at hand. Hence frequent abbreviations and much variety in spelling and punctuation. The edition of 1780 has been collated with the earlier editions; and in the numerous cases of difference, the earliest readings, unless palpable blunders, have been restored. Letters from later sources — whether from print or from manuscript — have been given just as they came to my hands. For the footnotes as far as page 139 in the first volume, I am wholly responsible. From that point, where begin notes of earlier editors, my own are placed in brackets.

W. L. C.

ANECDOTES

YORKSHIRE ANECDOTES

John Croft to Caleb Whitefoord *

York, August, 1795.

Dear Sir, — Herewith are the Anecdotes of *Sterne*, as I promised you, at your agreable Apartment *Adelphi* and are all I cou'd collect, or recollect at present. 'Tis a Pity it had not been hinted before as Mrs Bridges, and others who were very intimately acquainted with him and the Family are lately deceased. Yet upon the whole very few *Materialls* or Incidents cou'd possibly occur, worth notice, or to form his Life, as he lived so many years in obscurity, and what is termed still Life, further than as it may please or come home to you, or others who enjoyed his company, or are partiall to his Writings, and so glad to hear any *minutie* about him. I was as it were brought up under him, as he was Vicar of

* *The Whitefoord Papers*, edited by W. A. S. Hewins (Oxford, 1898).

Stillington, where I was born, the distance only of two miles from Sutton, and he was a constant Guest at my brother's Table, but my long absence abroad in Portugal, and his being so much taken up in the gay World made a large gap in our Intimacy, tho' am sorry to venture to pronounce, and dissent from the old Quodlibet de mortuis nil nisi bonum, that he was far from being a good man, as your Adelphi is from the Elephant that stood at Buckingham Gate. I was amused when I arrived at home (but happily not shocked) when I took up from my Table Cooks Edition 6^{d} Poets, to see an *Epitaph* * intended for you by the late Dr Goldsmith. No doubt you have seen it. I was formerly well acquainted with Goldsmith and we used to sup at the Chapter Coffee House together. It was a Pity that he did not write more *in verse* than in prose. He had a diffidence unnatural to his country about him.

Sterne's Daughter was a Girl of an odd turn, as no wonder from her Parents that she shou'd inherit Genius and as they were both so very particular, that she shou'd be so, allso from the manner that she was educated and brought

* *Postcript* to Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

up. At the Boarding School when the Misses used to plague and taunt her with the names of Miss *Tristram* and Miss *Shandy* after her Fathers Book came out, she bethought herself of this contrivance. She wrote Love Letters, as if from each or every one of the Players of the York Company to the respective young Ladies, and when most of the Letters were interrupted, by their Parents or Guardians, severall of them were flogg^{d}, others shutt up in dark closetts, and severely treated as you may suppose, and it brought such a Slurr upon the Play House that the Theatre was a good deal deserted by reason of the supposed perfidy or guilt of the Players that it became incumbent on them to make out the Authors of their Injury, when at last it was luckily brought to light tho' with some difficulty. * * *

I hope that this will find you perfectly well, not forgetting your Mouser! I was sorry that was obliged to leave, For otherwise shou'd have been glad to have attended the Sale of Pictures, as wou'd certainly have bidden for the Picture that you pointed out to me if cou'd have had it on reasonable terms, as I admire Pictures very much and am very fond of them, tho' have not money to lay out that

way, and the *Polemburg* is my only one, indebted to you for touching it up. It looks now quite another thing since it is got into a new frame, *quite smart.* I hope this will find you perfectly well, and wish there was any inducement to turn your Face to the North, where it wou'd now be flattered with a gentle Zephyr in lieu of a blast from plump cheeked Boreas. You wou'd see our City improved very much — an apology, allowed as we have not Trade or Manufactures, the Minster beautified without, a new Ceiling to the Roof within, and a new River or Canal to the Town, and not any one wou'd be gladder than I shou'd be to see you here. As we have lost so many of our acquaintᶜᵉ (perhaps you may add friends among them) let us reinforce our regards and cherish our living ones, as every day carries of one or other while our Hour glasses still run and it may be called day. If permitted to use a dead language I will finish my Letter with those beautiful lines of Tibullus,

Te spectem suprema mihi quum venerit hora
Te teneam moriens deficiente manu !

Dʳ Sir
Yours very sincerely &c.
JOHN CROFT.

P. S. I wish when you meet with any *Bons Mots* or *Epigrams* you would be so good to communicate, since we entered upon a Commutation Treaty.

ANECDOTES OF STERNE VULGARLY TRISTRAM SHANDY

Lawrence Sterne was born in Ireland, his Father was a Capt in the Army as by his own account it appears — that after his decease — they came over and settled at York, at the instance of Dr Sterne, his Uncle, Precentor of the Cathedral, a rich and opulent man, presume the elder Brother — the Family originally Yorkshire, and descended from Sterne, Archbishop of York. As said before they were under the Protection of the Precentor, who defrayed the expences of young Laury's education at the University, and afterwards provided him his Preferment in the Church, which depended upon the Cathedral. He was said to display marks of early genius at School, tho' he was careless and inattentive to his book, on which his Master pronounced that he wou'd turn out a great man. The same humour prevailed at College. In his younger years he was a good deal employed by his Uncle,

ure owing to her *insane* state, which afforded him the more time for Study, and to relieve melancholy, that he first attempted, and sett about the work of Tristram Shandy, and when he produced the Copy, to severall Gent.ⁿ of York, they considered it merely as a laughable book, and when that he offered it to the Booksellers, they wou'd not have anything to say to it, nor wou'd they offer any price for it. The same happened when he offered it to Dodsley in London and at the last offered twenty pounds for it, and so it hung on his hands, till after some time a M.ʳ Lee a Gent.ⁿ of York and a Bachelor of a liberall turn of mind lent him One hundred pounds towards the Printing the Work, which took place in the year 1760,* when the two first volumes of Tristram Shandy were first printed at York and about 200 Copys printed. When he offered them again to Dodsley and sent him a set of 'em to London, he returned for answer, that they were not saleable; however that he would give him 40*l.* for the

take the air, he [Sterne] proposed coursing in the way practised in Bohemia. For that purpose he procured bladders and filled them with beans and tied them to the wheels of a single horse-chair, when he drove madam into a stubble field. With the motion of the carriage and the bladders' rattle it alarmed the hares, and the greyhounds were ready to take them."

* A slip for 1759.

Copyright, provided that he would stand half the chance of the sale of the remaining Copys that were left, which was refused as Sterne had parted with severall of them among his friends. Some months after, it happened luckily for Sterne that Mr Croft of Stillington, who was setting off for London on particular Business met Sterne in the street in the morning and asked if that he wou'd go up to town with him, moreover, in the vulgar Phrase, that he would frank him and defray his expenses back, to which Sterne replied all that was very kind, but that he cou'd not leave his wife in the state that she was in, to which Mr C. answered that as he cou'd not possibly do her any good by his attendance that he had better go along with him, which was agreed upon, with this *Proviso* that Sterne was to have an hours law to go home to pack up his best breeches, which being granted they sett off together and arrived in London and lodged at Mr Cholmley's, Chapell street. The next morning Sterne was missing at breakfast. He went to Dodsleys where on inquiry for Tristram Shandy's works, his Vanity was highly flattered, when the Shopman told him, that there was not such a Book to be had in London either for Love or money,

when an interview took place with Dodsley who gave him a cordiall reception. Soon after Mr Croft and Cholmley passing by Pall Mall in a coach, who should they see in Dodsley's Shop but Sterne who accosting them said that he was mortgaging his brains to Dodsley for 50*l.*, the overplus of Six hundred pounds, that he stood out for above the Bargain of Six hundred pounds, that he offered him for the Copy of the two volumes of Tristram Shandy, and for two Volumes of Sermons which he was to compose in two months time, under the title of Yorick's Sermons, on a further condition that he was to engage to write a vol. of Tristram Shandy every year, and so to continue the work during his life and that he stood out for the odd Fifty pounds, when the Gentn advized him not to haggle, or bargain any longer about the matter, but to close the agreemt with Dodsley which he did, after which he returned to Chapell street and came skipping into the room, and said that he was the richest man in Europe. It happened at the same time, the Living of Coxwold became vacant by the death of the Incumbent, the Revd Mr Midgley, when Mr Croft waited upon Earl Falconberg and solicited the Living for Sterne, who gave it him,

the Living two hundred pounds per annum. To so fortuitous a change and event of Fortune the World is indebted for Sterne's *Debut* in the great and fashionable Sphere and Circle of Life, after remaining so many years *perdu* and in obscurity a Vicar of Sutton on the Forest. After he went to London he frequently had cards of Invitation from the Nobility and People of the first Fashion, for a month to come, that it allmost amounted to a Parliamentary Interest to have his company at any rate, all which was more than his feeble Frame cou'd bear, and what with Presents from the Nobility on which he plumed himself highly (and particularly a Silver Ink Standish from Earl Spencer which he boasted of) that his Vanity mounted on his slowest Hobby Horse ran away with him beyond all bounds, and he boasted of Favours that he never received, and lastly he flattered himself that his Person was very much admired by the Ladies, so that he turned his mind intirely to Galantry. Sterne said that his first Plan, was to travell his Hero Tristram Shandy all over Europe and after making his remarks on the different Courts, proceed with making strictures and reflections on the different Governments of

Europe and finish the work with an eulogium on the superior constitution of England and at length to return Tristram well informed and a compleat English Gentleman.

His idea was allso to dedicate his book to Mr Pitt then Secretary of State, that it might lay in his Parlour Window, and amuse him after the Fatigues of Business as a lounging Book.

When Sterne read some of the loose sheets of the Copy of Tristram Shandy to a select company assembled at Mr Croft's for that purpose after dinner, they fell asleep at which Sterne was so nettled that he threw the Manuscript into the fire, and had not luckily Mr Croft rescued the scorched papers from the flames, the work wou'd have been consigned to oblivion.

On Sterne's first arrival in London, Dr Warburton, then Bishop of Glocester, sent for him and gave him a purse of money attended with severall books to improve his Stile, with proper and salutary advice for his future conduct in life and pursuits in Literature, which he totally disregarded, and treated with contempt, as appeared when he fell into the Company and affected a Set of Wits in London at that

time, Foot, Delavall, &c., which led him into great expence, when he sett up a Carriage, and came down into Yorkshire, in a superior style that he soon spent the money which so liberally flowed from the Publick for the produce of his pen and the further sweat of his brow.

Sterne and his friend Hall of Skelton Castle were elemented together, Fellow Students at Jesus College, Cambridge, at the same time, when ever after their Friendship continued one and indivisible thro' Life. Sterne's Picture hangs in the Combination Room of that College, and they used to study under a large Wallnutt Tree, in the Inner Court, when one of 'em wrote underneath these lines

> This shou'd be the Tree of Knowledge
> As it stands in so very wise a Colledge.

Sterne maintained a long Paper war in the Newspapers at York, supported by Dr Fountayne, the present Dean against Dr Topham of the Spirituall Court which gave Birth to the Political Romance, intitled the Watch Coat. It was reputed one of the best of his Peices. The Publication was suppressed as it gave offence to the Dignity of the Church, till

after Sterne's decease, tho' it had been privately printed, when the copies were all bought up by the present Precentor.

It appeared by Sterne's Accompt Book that he had received 1500*l.* of Dodsley at different times for his Publications.

The Books that he studied and drew from most were the Moyen de Parvenir, a small French book, I had it from himself, Montaignes Essays, he affected the style of Rabelais, and particularly Bishop Halls Works which he copied a pie de la lettre. He was allso a great Admirer of the pathetick novell Le Doyen de Coleraine, the naivetè of the Paysanne Parvenue de Marsiaux &c^{a}. He has lately been accused of Plagiarism by a Mr Ferrier, for which refer to Manchester Essays, Vol. 4th. He affected mostly Books of the Black Letter from whence he cou'd draw storys without being detected.

Sterne had an Intrigue with a Mrs Draper who^{m} he celebrates so much in his works under a feigned name. She was the Lady of the Governor of Bombay, — a most beautifull young woman. He accompanied her on her passage back to India as far as the Downs where at parting they vowed eternall Fidelity

and it was settled that when she arrived in India she was to obtain an Appointment from her Husband, and afterwards return to Europe and so to continue to live together in Italy on the Banks of the River Arno. She is since deceased.

After Sterne's Decease, all his loose papers were burned by the late Prince of Wales's Chaplain who officiated at his Funeral, amongst which were a large Parcel of Letters of Love and Gallantry from Ladies of the first Rank and Quality.

Sterne's Mother died in the common Goal at York in a wretched condition, or soon after she was released. It was held unpardonable in him not to relieve her, when he had the means of doing it, as a subscription was set on foot for the purpose. His Sister married a Publican in London. Never anyone dwelt more upon Humanity in Theory but it does not appear that he putt so much of it in practice.

A many Idle tales are told of Sterne in the Country. Once it is said that as he was going over the Fields on a sunday to preach at Stillington it happened that his Pointer Dog sprung a Covey of Partridges, when he went directly home for his Gun and left his

Flock that was waiting for him in the Church, in the lurch.

Another time when he was skaiting on the Car at Stillington, the Ice broke in with him in the middle of the Pond, and none of the Parishioners wou'd assist to extricate him, as they were at variance. Another time a Flock of Geese assembled in the Church Yard at Sutton, when his Wife bawl'd out "Laurie, powl 'em," i.e. pluck the quills, on which they were ready to riot and mob Laurie.

They generally considered him as crazy, or crackbrained. He was not steady to his Pastimes, or Recreations. At one time he wou'd take up the Gun and follow shooting till he became a good shott, then he wou'd take up the Pencil and paint Pictures. He chiefly copied Portraits. He had a good Idea of Drawing, but not the least of mixing his colours. There are severall Pictures of his painting at York, such as they are.

Sterne left only a Daughter Lydia, who, after his decease, retired with her Mother into France after she had settled with the next Incumbent for the Dilapidations at the Parsonage House at Sutton, which he refers to in his works, and they lived upon a joint annuity

which arose from a very liberal subscription, which took place in their behalf, among the Nobility and Gentry, which amounted to above 1000*l*. The Mother died soon after in France and the Daughter married Monsr. Medalle a French March^{t} and a Protestant in Normandy of good Character but of no extraordinary credit. He died soon after they married, and she is since dead.

Sterne's Popularity at one time arose to that pitch, that on a Wager laid in London that a Letter addressed to Tristram Shandy in Europe shou'd reach him when luckily the Letter came down into Yorkshire and the Post Boy meeting Sterne on the road to Sutton pulled off his hatt and gave it him.

When it was Sterne's turn to preach at the Minster half of the Congregation usually went out of the Church as soon as he mounted the Pulpit, as his Delivery and Voice were so very disagreeable.

Sterne was best and shewed himself to most advantage in a small Company, for in a large one he was frequently at a Loss and dumb-foundered as he assumed the privilege of a Wit, he wou'd frequently come out with very silly things and expressions which if they did

not meet that share of approbation from the Publick which he expected he wou'd be very angry and even affrontive.

Extract from a Letter in Continuation

YORK, 19th June, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR, — * * * I hope in future to be able to afford you more Anecdotes of your friend the late Mr Sterne, as thro' the means of a servant that lived with him may be able to procure for you some domestick ones. Sterne and his Wife, tho' they did not *gee* well together for she used to say herself, that the largest House in England cou'd not contain them both, on account of their Turmoils and Disputes, they were every day writing and addressing Love Letters to one another — for his Love to his Wife, refer you to the Latin Epistle to his friend Hall in the Collection of Letters. It was agreed betwixt them to have a Strong Box with a Nick in the Top and so they were to putt in what each saved out of their private expenses towards raising a Fortune for their Daughter Lidia when unhappily Mrs Sterne fell ill, and she espied Laurie breaking open the Strong Box. She fainted, and

unluckily a Quarrel ensued. This Story Mrs S. told herself inter alia which militated against the stability of poor Laurie. * * *

Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully and sincerely,

J. CROFT.

Richard Chapman to the Earl of Fauconberg *

NEWBOROUGH, September 25, 1761.

Enclosed is a new plan for the pews in Coxwold church, which is a new scheme of Mr. Sterne's. * * * It will be something in the form of a cathedral; it will give a better sound, a better light, and will all face the parson alike, and the other way, half the church will be with their backs to the pulpit, which will make a dispute for their seats, and this plan will go crossways on the old seats, so that no one will know their own place. * * *

I am extremely obliged to your lordship for the coronation news, and am glad your lord-

* Richard Chapman was Steward to Lord Fauconberg of Newburgh Priory. In a business letter belonging to March, 1760, Chapman expresses extreme gratification that Mr. Sterne has been appointed to the Coxwold living. And in another letter, written in 1762, while Sterne was seriously ill abroad, he says that Sterne was supposed to be dead, and all his congregation went into mourning for him. The extract from the letter given here is taken from *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections* (Vol. II., London, 1903).

DESIGN OF TRISTRAM SHANDY

G. E. G. to the Printer of the St. James Chronicle *

SIR, — The very extraordinary Genius and first-rate Wit of the late Mr. Sterne have rendered his Name and his Works so famous, and his Imitators have been so numerous, that I apprehend any Information concerning him or his Writings will be acceptable. The following Letter was written to a Friend of mine by one of his Acquaintance, in Answer to some Queries proposed by the former, concerning Mr. Sterne. It relates to the first two Volumes only of his Life of Tristram Shandy, as the others were not published at that Time. The Gentleman did not then choose to put his Name to it, and my Friend not having taken any Memorandum of it, does not recollect who his Correspondent was.

You may, however, Sir, be assured that the Letter is genuine, and that the Facts mentioned in it are to be depended on.

* Taken from the fly-leaves of Isaac Reed's copy of Sterne's first two sermons, now owned by Mr. W. A. White, of New York City.

DESIGN OF TRISTRAM SHANDY

As the Editors of the other Newspapers generally take the Liberty of copying any curious Paper they see in yours, and without saying whence they stole them, I just mention that I send this to the St. James's Chronicle, and to no other, in order to prevent your Readers from supposing that you have copied from them.

Your's,

G. E. G.

April 10th, 1788

April 15th, 1760.

Indeed, my dear Sir, your Letter was quite a Surprise to me; I had heard that Mr. Shandy had engaged the Attention of the gay Part of the World; but when a Gentleman of your active and useful Turn can find Time for so many Enquiries about him, I see it is not only by the Idle and the Gay that he is read and admired, but by the Busy and the Serious: Nay, Common-Fame says, but Common-Fame is a great Liar, that it is not only a Duke and an Earl and a new made Bishop, who are contending for the Honour of being Godfather to his dear Child Tristram, but that Men and Women too, of all Ranks and Denominations,

are caressing the Father, and providing Slavering-Bibs for the Bantling.

In Answer to your Enquiries, I have sate down to write a longer Letter than usual, to tell you all I know about him and the Design of his Book. I think it was some Time in June last that he showed me his Papers, more than would make four such Volumes as those two he has published, and we sate up a whole Night together reading them. I thought I discovered a Vein of Humour, which must take with Readers of Taste, but I took the Liberty to point out some gross Allusions which I apprehended would be Matter of just Offense, and especially when coming from a Clergyman, as they would betray a Forgetfulness of his Character. He observed, that an Attention to his Character would damp his Fire and check the Flow of his Humour, and that if he went on, and hoped to be read, he must not look at his Band or his Cassock. I told him, that an over Attention to his Character might perhaps have that Effect, but that there was no Occasion for him to think all the Time he was writing his Book, that he was writing Sermons. — That it was no difficult Matter to avoid the Dirtiness of Swift on the one Hand, and the Looseness

of Rabelais on the other — and that if he steered in that middle Course, he might make it not only a very entertaining, but a very instructive and useful Book; and on that Plan I said all I could to encourage him to come out with a Volume or two in the Winter.

At this Time he was haunted with Doubts and Fears of its not taking. He did not, however, think fit to follow my Advice, yet when the two Volumes came out, I wrote a Paper or two by Way of recommending them, and particularly pointed to Yorick, Trim reading the Sermon, and such Parts as I was most pleased with myself.

If any Apology can be made for his gross Allusions and *double Entendres*, it is, that his Design is to take in all Ranks and Professions, and to laugh them out of their Absurdities. If you should ask him, why he begins his Hero nine Months before he is born, his Answer would be, that he might exhibit some Character inimitably ridiculous, without going out of his Way, and which he could not introduce with Propriety, had he begun him later. But as he intends to produce him somewhere in the 3d or 4th Volume, we will hope, if he does not

keep him too long in the Nursery, his future Scenes will be less offensive. Old Women indeed there are of both Sexes, whom even Uncle Toby can neither entertain nor instruct, and yet we all have Hobby-Horses of our own. The Misfortune is we are not content to ride them quietly ourselves, but are forcing every Body that comes in our Way to get up behind. Is not Intolerance the worst Part of Popery? what Pity it is, that many a zealous Protestant should be a staunch Papist without knowing it!

The Design, as I have said, is to take in all Ranks and Professions. A System of Education is to be exhibited, and thoroughly discussed; for forming his future Hero, I have recommended a private Tutor, and named no less a Person than the great and learned Dr. W[arburton]: Polemical Divines are to come in for a Slap. An Allegory has been run up on the Writers on the Book of Job. The Doctor is the Devil who smote him from Head to Foot, and G[re]y, P[ete]rs and Ch[appel]ow his miserable Comforters. A Groupe of mighty Champions in Literature is convened at Shandy-Hall. Uncle Toby and the Corporal are Thorns in the private Tutor's Side, and

operate upon him as they did on Dr. Slop at reading the Sermon. All this for poor Job's Sake, whilst an Irish Bishop, a quondum Acquaintance of Sterne's, who has written on the same Subject, and loves dearly to be in a Crowd, is to come uninvited and introduce himself.

So much for the Book, now for the Man. I have some Reason to think that he meant to sketch out his own Character in that of Yorick, and indeed in some Parts of it I think there is a striking Likeness, but I do not know so much of him as to be able to say, how far it is kept up. The Gentlemen in and about York will not allow of any Likeness at all in the best Parts of it; whether his Jokes and his Jibes may not be felt by many of his Neighbours, and make them unwilling to acknowledge a Likeness, would be hard to say; certain, however, it is, that he has never, as far as I can find, been very acceptable to the Grave and Serious. It is probable too he might give Offense to a very numerous Party, when he was a Curate and just setting out, for he told me, that he wrote a weekly Paper in support of the Whigs during the long Canvas for the great contested Election for this

County, and that he owed his Preferment to that Paper — so acceptable was it to the then Archbishop.

From that Time, he says, he has hardly written any Thing till about two Years ago; when a Squabble breaking out at York, about opening a Patent and putting in a new Life, he sided with the Dean and his Friends, and tryed to throw the Laugh on the other Party, by writing the History of an old Watchcoat; but the Affair being compromised he was desired not to publish it. About 500 Copies were printed off, and all committed to the Flames, but three or four, he said, one of which I read, and, having some little Knowledge of his *Dramatis Personæ*, was highly entertained by seeing them in the Light he had put them. This was a real Disappointment to him, he felt it, and it was to this Disappointment that the World is indebted for Tristram Shandy. So till he had finished his Watchcoat, he says, he hardly knew that he could write at all, much less with Humour, so as to make his Reader laugh. But it is my own Opinion, that he is yet a Stranger to his own Genius, or at least that he mistakes his Fort. He is ambitious of appearing in his

Fool's Coat, but he is more himself, and his Powers are much stronger, I think, in describing the tender Passions, as in Yorick, Uncle Toby, and the Fly, and in making up the Quarrel between old Mr. Shandy and Uncle Toby.

I can say nothing to the Report you have heard about Mrs. Sterne; the few Times I have seen her she was all Life and Spirits, too much so, I thought. He told me, in a Letter last Christmas, that his Wife had lost her Senses by a Stroke of the Palsy; that the Sight of the Mother in that Condition had thrown his poor Child into a fever; and that in the Midst of these Afflictions, it was a strange Incident that his ludicrous Book should be printed off; but that there was a stranger still behind, which was, that every Sentence of it had been conceived and written under the greatest Heaviness of Heart, arising from some Hints the poor Creature had dropped of her Apprehensions; and that in her Illness he had found in her Pocket-Book

"*Jan. 1st, Le dernier de ma vie, helas!*"

Thus, my dear Sir, I have been as particular as I well can, and have given you as ample an Account both of the Man and the Design of

his Book as you can reasonably expect from a Person, who, bating a few Letters, has not conversed more than three or four Days with this very eccentrick Genius.

Your's, &c.

FIRST BIOGRAPHY OF STERNE

A Letter to the Ladies Magazine *

MADAM, — As the chit chat of the day is the most agreeable of all histories, and the conversation of one company furnishes the natural entertainment of another, give me leave to contribute to the variety of your collection, by some table-talk upon a favourite and fashionable subject.

Who has not read the life of Tristram Shandy, the most eloquent of unborn babes, the favourite of Fame and Fortune? The discourse, where I was, turned not upon the book, but the man; and, I hope, what was so pleasing to myself, may be amusing to your readers. We long to know something of the man, whose exploits astonish, or whose wit has charmed us: who would not have gone a journey to see Thurot, or who will grudge five minutes and a half to know something of poor Yorick?

* Quoted here from *The London Chronicle*, May 3–6, 1760.

One can no more swear to the truth of conversation, than of a song; but as these anecdotes dropped from the mouths of those who knew him in the country, or have been intimate with him in town, probably they are as true as odd things commonly are. At least there is no harm in them: for I think he is the only man, of whom many speak well, and of whom no body speaks ill.

Yorick is a gentleman, a clergyman, and a man of learning; singular in the highest degree; for he has an infinite share of wit and goodness: things, of which one does not meet in general with a great deal any where; but which are very seldom, indeed, found in any degree together; 'tis one of the odd qualities of this very odd person, to join contradictions.

Yorick is the son of an officer, native of the field of war; and, to add to the whimsicality, born in the barracks of Dublin. Therefore his knowledge of counterscarps and ravelins come naturally to him, as the beggar says in the play; but where he acquired that deep and penetrating judgment in man-midwifery, is difficult to say; unless he was ushered into the world by a man-midwife; which, perhaps, those will not think improbable, who observe

the high regard he expresses every where for that amphibious profession.

But, though born of the barracks, Yorick is a son of the church, and, if we may take the opinion of a bishop on his sermon, he is no unworthy one. His great-grandfather was an archbishop, and his uncle a prebendary of one of our cathedrals: who his father was, I have told already; but whether he had a grandfather or not, I could never hear.

At school, Yorick would learn when he pleased; which was not oftener than once a fortnight: and, though he had more whippings than lessons, yet no mark of the first remains, while not a trace or scratch is left of the other; so retentive is mind, and so soon does frail flesh lose all impression.

From school Yorick passed in due course to the university, where he spent the usual number of years; read a little, laugh'd a great deal, and sometimes took the diversion of puzzling his tutors. He left Cambridge with the character of an odd man, that had no harm in him; and, who had parts if he would use them.

He seated himself quietly in the lap of the church; and if this was not yet covered with

a fringed cushion, 'twas not naked. A mat is better than the pavement fifty to five at any time. Here Yorick waited patiently till time and chance, which guide where judgment once presided, should raise him to what they pleased: but here he fell into the way of a dispute, which made him first feel himself; and to which, perhaps, we owe the origin of the history of Tristram.

Friendship, not his own immediate concerns, brought him into this: for Yorick is singular for another whimsical disposition; which is, he loves and feels for his friends, a great deal more tenderly than for himself, at any time. There happened a dispute among the superiors of his order, in which his best friend, one of the best men in the world, was concerned. I shall not enter into the particulars; for the thing is long past, and 'twould be invidious. 'Twill be enough to say, that a certain person, who had a very good post for his life, wanted it most unfairly to be insured to this lady and his son, after his decease. The friend of Yorick was against this, and combated the proposal earnestly; but while the interest of the other side over-came all the reason on his, Yorick attacked the monopolizer in joke: he

wrote the history of a good warm watch coat, with which the present possessor could not be content to cover his own shoulders, unless he might also cut out of it a petticoat for his wife, and for his son a pair of breeches.

What all the serious arguments in the world could not effect, this brought about. The man sent him word, that if he would not print that paper, he would quit his pretensions. Yorick, who had read it over coolly by this time, told him, he might be at rest; he had thrown it into the fire, because 'twas too ill-natured. Perhaps the burning this paper contributed more to raise the reputation of Parson Yorick, than any thing he could have published. The reason of his destroying it spoke a goodness of heart, which charmed the few odd people who had something of the same turn. As to the rest, ten times more was said about this piece than it deserved, because it was burnt; and the general voice, which never reports without exaggeration, whether it be at York or London, cried it up as one of the most perfect and excellent things human invention ever had produced. I don't doubt, but it deserved great praise; and if his present book were what a lady could read, perhaps you would say, he

deserved, at least, all that was said about it. But 'tis not of the book, but of the man, we are talking.

An incident, much about the same time, contributed extremely to establish the reputation of Yorick's wit: 'twas this. There was a coffee-room in the principal inn, where those who drank little wine, and did not choose too much expence, might read the news-papers. Curiosity is a great article in Yorick's character, and one of his greatest enjoyments of life was an inoffensive hour in a snug corner of that coffee-house. There was a troop of horse in the town, and a gay young fellow, spoiled by the free education of the world but with no real harm in him, was one of the officers. This gay boy, who loved all freedom in discourse, therefore hated a parson. Poor Yorick was obliged to hear healths he did not like; and would only shuffle about, or pretend deafness; but the hour was come, when these pretences were to pass no longer. The captain was in the middle of a Covent-garden story, loud, indecent, and profane in his expressions; when poor Yorick entered, he stopped on a sudden, and began, with all possible contempt and ill usage, to abuse the clergy, fixing

his eye on Yorick, and pointing to him as an example on every occasion. Yorick pretended, as long as he could with any decency, not to hear his rudeness; but when that became impossible, he walked up, and gravely said to him, "Sir, I'll tell you a story. My father is an officer; and he's so brave himself, that he is fond of everything else that's brave, even to his dog: you must know we have at this time one of the finest creatures in the world, of this kind; he is the handsomest dog you ever saw, the most spirited in the world, and yet the best natured that can be imagined; so lively, that he charms everybody; but he has a cursed trick that spoils all; he never sees a clergyman, but he instantly flies at him."— "Pray how long has he had that trick?" says the captain. — "Sir," replies Yorick, "ever since he was a PUPPY." The young man blush'd: and at length, getting up, "Doctor," says he, "I thank you for your story: give me your hand; I'll never rail at a parson again as long as I live."

These, and a number of pleasant repartees beside, always conducted with temper, and enforced with good sense, established Yorick in the country, the character of a wit of the first

rate, and a very perfect master of humour; and the publication of his book, obtained him, by the same uncommon means, that is, by really deserving it, the same high reputation in town. Here were none of the common arts of making a reputation practised: no friend before hand told people how excellent a book it was: no bookseller, a proprietor, whose interest should lead him to cry it up, and bid his authors do the same. A parcel of the books were sent up out of the country; they were unknown, and scarce advertised; but thus friendless they made their own way, and their author's. They have been resembled to Swift's, and equalled to Rabelais', by those who are considered as judges; and they have made their author's way to the tables of the first people in the kingdom, and to the friendship of Mr. Garrick.

Fools tremble at the allusions that may be made from the present volumes, and authors dread the next: forty people have assumed to themselves the ridiculous titles in these volumes: and it is scarce to be credited whose liberal purse has bought off the dread of a tutor's character, in those which are to come.

As to the author himself, his view was gen-

eral — He is too good, and too good-natur'd a man, to have levell'd a syllable at any private person: nay, where one character seemed possible of an application which he had never intended, he alter'd it, new-dress'd it, and even sent it to the person who might be supposed, by the malicious, to be intended by it; nor would suffer the page to be published, till he was assured by that gentleman it gave him no offence.

But here arose a new and very whimsical difficulty: the picture is that of DR. SLOP; and when the ingenious Dr. B——* had disclaimed all that resemblance which might have been supposed to exist between that imaginary character and his, another took up the distrust. Yorick's is a life of odd adventures; and this deserves to be recorded among them: for, had not the sacred character of clergyman prevented, it seems as if blood must have atoned for the imaginary offence. A doctor of the neighbourhood called him up early, to complain of the indecent liberties taken with him, in the character of SLOP; and, tho' there was not the least resemblance between the two (absurdity excepted) 'twas difficulty to persuade him.

* Dr. John Burton.

"Sir," says Yorick, "are you a man-midwife?" "No!" "Are you a Roman Catholic?" "No." "Why, where, in the name of Nonsense, is the resemblance? Was you ever splash'd and dirted?" "Yes; and that 's the thing you have taken advantage of, to expose me." The good Yorick, who would not give any human creature a moment's uneasiness, to be the author of all that ever Pope praised, or Shakespear wrote, took infinite pains to persuade this gentleman of his error; but in vain: at length, as there is a stretch under which Patience snaps, he told the doctor, "Sir, I have not hurt you; but take care: I am not born yet; but heaven knows what I may do in the two next volumes." This threat was worse than all. We feel what we fear much more than what we really suffer. The country doctor, not knowing how to revenge his own cause, fixed upon two of his brethren, whom he thought interested in a case much less equivocal. I am afraid Mr. Yorick has indeed been merry with the respectable character of Dr. Mead,* under a name which I don't know how to write to a lady. The doctor here thought he

* Dr. Richard Mead, the Dr. Kunastrokius of *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I. Chapter VII.

had his enemy sure, and wrote up to the two gentlemen, who had married the daughters of that celebrated physician. to put them in mind how much their honour was concerned in this insult on the memory of their father-in-law: but even here he failed. These gentlemen, however much they respect the virtues of that character, became no champions for his foibles; but can meet Yorick without reproaches or blushings.

Resentment, therefore, has been able to do the author of Tristram Shandy not the least harm; but the spirit of the performance has been of infinite service to him. Every body is curious to see the author; and, when they see him, every body loves the man. There is a pleasantry in his conversation that always pleases; and a goodness in his heart, which adds the greater tribute of esteem.

Many have wit; but there is a peculiar merit in giving variety. This most agreeable joker can raise it from any subject; for he seems to have studied all; and can suit it to his company; the depth of whose understandings he very quickly fathoms.

At the last dinner that the late lost amiable Charles Stanhope gave to Genius, Yorick was

present. The good old man was vexed to see a pedantic medicine monger take the lead, and prevent that pleasantry, which good wit and good wine might have occasioned, by a discourse in the unintelligible language of his profession, concerning the difference between the phrenitis and the paraphrenitis, and the concommitant categories of the mediastinum and pleura.

Good-humour'd Yorick saw the sense of the master of the feast, and fell into the cant and jargon of physic, as if he had been one of Radcliffe's travellers. "The vulgar practice," says he, "savours too much of mechanical principles; the venerable ancients were all empirics, and the profession will never regain its ancient credit, till practice falls into the old tract again. I am myself an instance; I caught cold by leaning on a damp cushion, and, after sneezing and sniveling a fortnight, it fell upon my breast: they blooded me, blistered me, and gave me robs and bobs, and lobocks, and eclegmeta; but I grew worse: for I was treated according to the exact rules of the college. In short, from an inflammation it came to an ADHESION, and all was over with me. They advised me to Bristol, that

I might not do them the scandal of dying under their hands; and the Bristol people, for the same reason, consigned me over to Lisbon. But what do I? why, I considered an adhesion is, in plain English, only a sticking of two things together, and that force enough would pull them asunder. I bought a good ash-pole, and began leaping over all the walls and ditches in the country. From the height of the pole I used to come souce down upon my feet, like an ass when he tramples upon a bull-dog: but it did not do. At last, when I had raised myself perpendicularly over a wall, I used to fall exactly across the ridge of it, upon the side opposite to the adhesion. This tore it off at once, and I am as you see. Come fill a glass to the prosperity of the empiric medicine." If he had been asked elsewhere about this disorder (for he really had a consumptive disorder) he would have answered, that he was cured by Huxham's decoction of the bark, and elixir of vitriol.

We are talking of the singularities of Yorick; 'tis fit we name one more, which is the extreme candour and modesty of his temper. A vain man would be exalted extremely, at the attention that is paid to him;

the compliments, invitations, civilities, and applauses: he sees them in another light, attributing that to novelty, which perhaps few could more justly place to the account of merit. He says he is now just like a fashionable mistress, whom every body solicits, because 'tis the fashion, but who may walk the street a fortnight, and in vain solicit corporal Stare for a dinner.

To sum up all, we must recount the last and newest incident of all. Lord Falconberg has given Yorick a benefice; and the incumbent, whose death has made the vacancy, has left a widow destitute of all, but the country parson's certain legacy, a family of children. Yorick, when he entered upon the living, gave her, 'tis said, a hundred pounds, and proposes to take annual care of her. If anything can add to doing this, it is the modesty of concealing it. Others would take care it should be known; but on the contrary, this singular creature, when a friend was complimenting him upon this act of goodness, cut him short, and answered, "I'm an odd fellow; but if you hear any good of me, don't believe it."

STERNE AND THE STAGE

STERNE AND THE STAGE*

Though Mrs. Garrick often censured Mr. Sterne, yet both she and Mr. Garrick had a real regard for him. Sterne never possessed any equal spirits. He was always either in the cellar or the garret, and once meeting him at Drury-lane Theatre, I said to him, "As you are so intimate with Garrick, I wonder that you have never undertaken to write a Comedy." He seemed quite struck, and after a pause, with tears in his eyes, replied, "I fear I do not possess the proper talent for it, and I am utterly unacquainted with the business of the stage." — "The latter," I said, "would readily be supplied." I found, however, that he was at that time under embarrassment, and that a successful Comedy would have been particularly serviceable to him. But afterwards I had the pleasure of diverting him exceedingly by the following anecdote:

* *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs*, Vol. I. pp. 207–208 (London, 1826), of Joseph Cradock, a man of letters and amateur actor, — a friend of Garrick, whom he resembled, it is said, as a twin brother in personal appearance and mental power. When a mere boy, Cradock saw something of Sterne at Scarborough, — at the house of Sir Noah Thomas, a distinguished physician, and became from the first an enthusiastic admirer of Yorick.

"A gentleman applied to his friend to lend him some amusing book, and he recommended Harris's Hermes.* The gentleman, from the title, conceived it to be a novel, but turning it over and over, could make nothing out of it, and at last coldly returned it with thanks. His friend asked him how he had been entertained. 'Not much,' he replied, 'he thought that all these imitations of Tristram Shandy fell far short of the original.'"

Mr. Sterne, it may be supposed, was no great favourite with Dr. Johnson, and a lady once ventured to ask the grave doctor, how he liked Yorick's Sermons. — "I know nothing about them, Madam," was his reply. But sometime afterwards, forgetting himself, he severely censured them; and the lady very aptly retorted; "I understood you to say, Sir, that you had never read them." — "No, Madam, I did read them, but it was in a stage-coach; I should not have even deigned to have looked at them, had I been at large."

* *Hermes, or a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Universal Grammar* (1751), by James Harris (1709-80).

STERNE IN FRANCE

M. Tollot to John Hall-Stevenson, Esq.*

PARIS, le 4 Avril, 1762.

MON CHER MONSIEUR, — * * * * * * Cela me fait envier quelques fois les heureuses dispositions de notre ami Mr. Sterne; tous les objects sont couleur de rose pour cet heureux mortel, et ce qui se presente aux yeux des autres sous un aspect triste et lugubre, prende aux siens une face gaye et riante, il ne poursuit que le plaisir, et il ne fait pas comme d'autres qui quand ils l'ont atteint ne sçavent pas le plus souvent enjouir, pour lui il boit le *bole* jusques à la dernierre goutte et encore n'y a t'il pas moien de le desalterer. * * *

TOLLOT.

From the Same to the Same †

BOURDEUX, le 8 Janvier, 1764.

MON CHER MONSIEUR, — * * * * * * Nous arrivames le lendemain a Montpellier ou nous

* *Seven Letters written by Sterne and his Friends*, edited by W. Durrant Cooper (privately printed, London, 1844).

† *Ibid.*

trouvames notre ami Mr. Stern, sa femme, sa fille, Mr. Huet et quelques autres Angloises, j'eu je vous l'avoue baucoup de plaisir en revoiant le bon et agreable Tristram, qui me parut etre toujours a peu prez dans le meme etat ou je l'avois laissè a Paris, il avoit etè asser longtemps a Toulouse ou il se seroit amusè sans sa femme qui le poursuivoit partout, et qui vouloit etre de tout, ces dispositions dans cette bonne dame lui ont fait passer d'asser mauvais momens, il supporte tous ces desagreemens avec une patience d'ange, son intention etoit retourner en Angleterre avec sa famille, mais il paroit que ces deux dames veulent passer encore un an en France pour *finir* Miss Stern, pour lui il est determinè a quitter Montpellier dans le mois de Fevrier et de venir a Paris, je l'ai baucoup exhortè a venir nous y joindre j'aurai soin d'avoir une bonne chambre pour lui dans le meme hotel ou nous serons, nous y aurions une bonne table ou il aura toujours son couvert, et s'il veut nous le ramenerons en Angleterre avec nous, comme ce parti m'a paru lui convenir, je me flatte de le voir a Paris a la fin du mois prochain, je voudrois bien que vous voulussiez etre de la partie, ce seroit une grande augmentation de plaisir

pour nous et pour lui et nous pourrions nous y amuser pendant deux ou trois mois. * * *

TOLLOT.

A JEST RELATED BY DUTENS*

On the anniversary of the King's birth-day [June 4, 1762], Lord Tavistock [the English Ambassador] invited the few English gentlemen who were then at Paris, to dine with him, in honour of the day. I was of the party; not one of which was known to me, except those with whom I had travelled to Paris. I sat between Lord Berkeley, who was going to Turin, and the famous Sterne, author of Tristram Shandy, who was considered as the Rabelais of England. We were very jovial during dinner; and drank, in the English manner, the toasts of the day. The conversation turned upon Turin, which several of the company were on the point of visiting: upon which Mr. Sterne, addressing himself to me, asked me if I knew Mr. D * * *, naming me. I replied, "Yes, very intimately." The whole company began to laugh; and Sterne, who did

* *Memoirs of a Traveller, now in retirement. Written by himself, interspersed with historical, literary and political anecdotes.* Vol. V. pp. 5-8 (London, 1806).

not suppose me so near him, imagined that this Mr. D * * * must be a very singular character, since the mention of the name alone excited merriment. "Is not he rather a strange fellow?" added he, immediately. "Yes," replied I, "an original."—"I thought so," continued he; "I have heard him spoken of:" and then he began to draw a picture of me, the truth of which I pretended to acknowledge; while Sterne, seeing that the subject amused the company, invented from his fertile imagination many stories, which he related in his way, to the great diversion of us all. I was the first who withdrew; and I had scarcely left the house, when they told him who I was; they persuaded him that I had restrained myself at the time from respect to Lord Tavistock; but that I was not to be offended with impunity, and that he might expect to see me on the next day, to demand satisfaction for the improper language which he had used concerning me. Indeed he thought he had carried his raillery too far, for he was a little merry: he therefore came the following morning to see me, and to beg pardon for any thing that he might have said to offend me; excusing himself by that circumstance, and by the great

desire he had to amuse the company, who had appeared so merrily disposed from the moment he first mentioned my name. I stopped him short at once, by assuring him that I was as much amused at his mistake as any of the party; that he had said nothing which could offend me; and that, if he had known the man he had spoken of as well as I did, he might have said much worse things of him. He was delighted with my answer, requested my friendship, and went away highly pleased with me.

STERNE'S DEATH AS TOLD BY A FOOTMAN *

In the month of January, 1768, we set off for London. We stopped for some time at Almack's house in Pall-Mall. My master afterwards took Sir James Gray's house in Clifford-street, who was going ambassador to Spain. He now began house-keeping, hired a French cook, a house-maid, and a kitchen-maid, and kept a great deal of the best company. About this time, Mr. Sterne, the celebrated author, was taken ill at the silk-bag shop in Old Bond-street. He was sometimes called "Tristram Shandy," and sometimes "Yorick;" a very great favourite of the gentlemen's. One day my master had company to dinner who were speaking about him; the Duke of Roxburgh, the Earl of March, the

* "Travels in various parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, during a series of thirty years and upwards, by John Macdonald, a cadet of the family of Kippoch, in Invernesshire, who after the ruin of his family in 1765, was thrown, when a child, on the wide world, &c. Printed for the author, London, 1790." — Quoted here from D'Israeli's *Miscellanies of Literature.*

Earl of Ossory, the Duke of Grafton, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Hume, and Mr. James. "John," said my master, "go and inquire how Mr. Sterne is to-day." I went, returned and said, — I went to Mr. Sterne's lodging; the mistress opened the door; I inquired how he did. She told me to go up to the nurse; I went into the room, and he was just a-dying. I waited ten minutes; but in five he said, "Now it is come!" He put up his hand as if to stop a blow, and died in a minute. The gentlemen were all very sorry, and lamented him very much.

LETTERS

OF THE

LATE Rev. Mr. LAURENCE STERNE

TO HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS

DEDICATION

TO DAVID GARRICK, *Esq.*

WHEN I was ask'd to whom I should dedicate these Volumes, I carelessly answered, To no one — Why not? (replied the person who put the question to me.) Because most Dedications look like begging a protection to the book. Perhaps a worse interpretation may be given to it. No, no! already so much obliged, I cannot, will not, put another tax upon the generosity of any friend of Mr. Sterne's, or mine. I went home to my lodgings, and gratitude warmed my heart to such a pitch, that I vow'd they should be dedicated to the man my father so much admired —who, with an unprejudiced eye, read, and approved his works, and moreover loved the man — 'Tis to Mr. Garrick then, that I dedicate these Genuine Letters.

Can I forget the sweet Epitaph which proved Mr. Garrick's friendship, and opinion of him?

'Twas a tribute to friendship — and as a tribute of my gratitude I dedicate these Volumes to a man of understanding and feeling — Receive this, as it is meant — May you, dear Sir, approve of these Letters, as much as Mr. Sterne admired you — But Mr. Garrick, with all his urbanity, can never carry the point half so far, for Mr. Sterne was an enthusiast, if it is possible to be one, in favour of Mr. Garrick.

This may appear a very simple Dedication, but Mr. Garrick will judge by his own sensibility, that I can feel more than I can express, and I believe he will give me credit for all my grateful acknowledgements.

I am, with every sentiment of gratitude, and esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged

humble Servant,

LYDIA STERNE DE MEDALLE.

LONDON, June, 1775.

EPITAPH

Shall Pride a heap of sculptur'd marble raise,
Some worthless, unmourn'd titled fool to praise;
And shall we not by one poor grave-stone learn
Where Genius, Wit, and Humour, sleep with *Sterne?*

D. G.

PREFACE

In publishing these Letters the Editor does but comply with her mother's request, which was, that if any Letters were publish'd under Mr. Sterne's name, those she had in her possession (as well as those that her father's friends would be kind enough to send her) should be likewise publish'd — She depends much on the candour of the Public for the favourable reception of them, — their being genuine (she thinks, and hopes) will render them not unacceptable — She has already experienced much benevolence and generosity from her late father's friends — the remembrance of it will ever warm her heart with gratitude!

LETTER I*

To Miss L[umley]

[1740.]

YES! I will steal from the world, and not a babbling tongue shall tell where I am — Echo shall not so much as whisper my hiding-place — suffer thy imagination to paint it as a little sun-gilt cottage, on the side of a romantic hill — dost thou think I will leave love and friendship behind me? No! they shall be my companions in solitude, for they will sit down and rise up with me in the amiable form of my L——. We will be as merry and as innocent as our first parents in Paradise, before the arch fiend entered that indescribable scene.

The kindest affections will have room to shoot and expand in our retirement, and produce such fruit as madness, and envy, and ambition have always killed in the bud.— Let the human tempest and hurricane rage at a distance, the desolation is beyond the horizon of

* "In justice to Mr. Sterne's delicate feelings, I must here publish the following letters to Mrs. Sterne, before he married her, while she was in Staffordshire —— A good heart breathes in every line of them." — Mrs. Medalle's note to the edition of 1775.

peace. — My L. has seen a polyanthus blow in December — some friendly wall has sheltered it from the biting wind. — No planetary influence shall reach us, but that which presides and cherishes the sweetest flowers. God preserve us! how delightful this prospect in idea! We will build, and we will plant, in our own way — simplicity shall not be tortured by art — we will learn of Nature how to live — she shall be our alchymist, to mingle all the good of life into one salubrious draught. — The gloomy family of Care and Distrust shall be banished from our dwelling, guarded by thy kind and tutelar deity — we will sing our choral songs of gratitude, and rejoice to the end of our pilgrimage.

Adieu, my L. Return to one who languishes for thy society. L. STERNE.

LETTER II

To the Same

[1740.]

YOU bid me tell you, my dear L., how I bore your departure for S——, and whether the valley where D'Estella stands, retains still its looks — or, if I think the roses or jessamines

smell as sweet, as when you left it — Alas! everything has now lost its relish and look! The hour you left D'Estella, I took to my bed. — I was worn out by fevers of all kinds, but most by that fever of the heart with which thou knowest well I have been wasting these two years — and shall continue wasting till you quit S——. The good Miss S——, from the forebodings of the best of hearts, thinking I was ill, insisted upon my going to her. — What can be the cause, my dear L., that I never have been able to see the face of this mutual friend, but I feel myself rent to pieces? She made me stay an hour with her, and in that short space I burst into tears a dozen different times — and in such affectionate gusts of passion, that she was constrained to leave the room, and sympathise in her dressing-room — I have been weeping for you both, said she, in a tone of the sweetest pity — for poor L.'s heart, I have long known it — her anguish is as sharp as yours — her heart as tender — her constancy as great — her virtue as heroic — Heaven brought you not together to be tormented. I could only answer her with a kind look, and a heavy sigh — and returned home to your lodgings (which I have hired

till your return), to resign myself to misery — Fanny had prepared me a supper — she is all attention to me — but I sat over it with tears; a bitter sauce, my L., but I could eat it with no other — for the moment she began to spread my little table, my heart fainted within me. — One solitary plate, one knife, one fork, one glass! — I gave a thousand pensive, penetrating looks at the chair thou hadst so often graced, in those quiet and sentimental repasts — then laid down my knife and fork, and took out my handkerchief, and clapped it across my face, and wept like a child. — I do so this very moment, my L.; for, as I take up my pen, my poor pulse quickens, my pale face glows, and tears are trickling down upon the paper, as I trace the word L——. O thou! blessed in thyself, and in thy virtues — blessed to all that know thee — to me most so, because more do I know of thee than all thy sex. — This is the philtre, my L., by which thou hast charmed me, and by which thou wilt hold me thine, whilst virtue and faith hold this world together. — This, my friend, is the plain and simple magic, by which I told Miss —— I have won a place in that heart of thine, on which I depend so satisfied, that time, or distance, or change of

everything which might alarm the hearts of little men, create no uneasy suspense in mine — Wast thou to stay in S—— these seven years, thy friend, though he would grieve, scorns to doubt, or to be doubted — 'tis the only exception where security is not the parent of danger. — I told you poor Fanny was all attention to me since your departure — contrives every day bringing in the name of L. She told me last night (upon giving me some hartshorn), she had observed my illness began the very day of your departure for S——; that I had never held up my head, had seldom, or scarce ever, smiled, had fled from all society — that she verily believed I was broken-hearted, for she had never entered the room, or passed by the door, but she heard me sigh heavily — that I neither ate, or slept or took pleasure in anything as before — judge then, my L., can the valley look so well — or the roses and jessamines smell so sweet as heretofore? Ah me! — But adieu! — the vesper bell calls me from thee to my God! L. STERNE.

LETTER III

To the Same

[1740.]

BEFORE now my L. has lodged an indictment against me in the high court of Friendship — I plead guilty to the charge, and entirely submit to the mercy of that amiable tribunal. — Let this mitigate my punishment, if it will not expiate my transgression — do not say that I shall offend again in the same manner, though a too easy pardon sometimes occasions a repetition of the same fault. —— A Miser says, though I do no good with my money to-day, to-morrow shall be marked with some deed of beneficence. — The Libertine says, let me enjoy this week in forbidden and luxurious pleasures, and the next I will dedicate to serious thought and reflection. — The Gamester says, let me have one more chance with dice, and I will never touch them more. — The Knave of every profession wishes to obtain but independency, and he will become an honest man. — The Female coquette triumphs in tormenting her inamorato, for fear, after marriage, he should not pity her.

The apparition of the fifth instant (for letters may also be called so) proved more welcome as I did not expect it. Oh! my L———, thou art kind indeed to make an apology for me, and thou never wilt assuredly repent of one act of kindness — for being thy debtor, I will pay thee with interest. — Why does my L. complain of the desertion of friends? — Where does the human being live that will not join in this complaint? — It is a common observation, and perhaps too true, that married people seldom extend their regards beyond their own fireside. — There is such a thing as parsimony in esteem, as well as money — yet as one costs nothing, it might be bestowed with more liberality. — We cannot gather grapes from thorns, so we must not expect kind attachments from persons who are wholly folded up in selfish schemes. I do not know whether I most despise, or pity such characters — nature never made an unkind creature — ill-usage, and bad habits, have deformed a fair and lovely creation.

My L! — thou art surrounded by all the melancholy gloom of winter; wert thou alone, the retirement would be agreeable. ——— Disappointed ambition might envy such a retreat,

and disappointed love would seek it out. — Crowded towns, and busy societies, may delight the unthinking, and the gay — but solitude is the best nurse of wisdom. — Methinks I see my contemplative girl now in the garden, watching the gradual approaches of spring. — Dost not thou mark with delight the first vernal buds? the snow-drop, and primrose, these early and welcome visitors, spring beneath thy feet. — Flora and Pomona already consider thee as their handmaid; and in a little time will load thee with their sweetest blessing. — The feathered race are all thy own, and with them, untaught harmony will soon begin to cheer thy morning and evening walks. — Sweet as this may be, return — return — the birds of Yorkshire will tune their pipes, and sing as melodiously as those of Staffordshire.

Adieu, my beloved L. thine too much for my *peace*. L. STERNE.

LETTER IV

To the Same

[1740.]

I HAVE offended her whom I so tenderly love! — what could tempt me to it! but if a beggar was to knock at thy gate, wouldst thou not open the door and be melted with compassion? — I know thou wouldst, for Pity has erected a temple in thy bosom. — Sweetest, and best of all human passions! let thy web of tenderness cover the pensive form of affliction, and soften the darkest shades of misery! — I have reconsidered this apology, and, alas! what will it accomplish? Arguments, however finely spun, can never change the nature of things — very true — so a truce with them.

I have lost a very valuable friend by a sad accident, and what is worse, he has left a widow and five young children to lament this sudden stroke. — If real usefulness and integrity of heart could have secured him from this, his friends would not now be mourning his untimely fate. — These dark and seemingly cruel dispensations of Providence, often make the best of human hearts complain. — Who can

paint the distress of an affectionate mother, made a widow in a moment, weeping in bitterness over a numerous, helpless, and fatherless offspring! — God! these are thy chastisements, and require (hard task!) a pious acquiescence.

Forgive me this digression, and allow me to drop a tear over a departed friend; and what is more excellent, an honest man. My L.! thou wilt feel all that kindness can inspire in the death of ——. The event was sudden, and thy gentle spirit would be more alarmed on that account. — But, my L., thou hast less to lament, as old age was creeping on, and her period of doing good, and being useful, was nearly over. — At sixty years of age the tenement gets fast out of repair, and the lodger with anxiety thinks of a discharge. — In such a situation the poet might well say,

"The soul uneasy, &c."*

My L. talks of leaving the country — may a kind angel guide thy steps hither! — Solitude at length grows tiresome. — Thou sayest thou wilt quit the place with regret — I think so too. — Does not something uneasy mingle with the very reflection of leaving it? It is

* Pope's *Essay on Man*, I. 97.

like parting with an old friend, whose temper and company one has long been acquainted with. — I think I see you looking twenty times a day at the house — almost counting every brick and pane of glass, and telling them at the same time with a sigh, you are going to leave them. — Oh happy modification of matter! they will remain insensible of thy loss. — But how wilt thou be able to part with thy garden? — The recollection of so many pleasing walks must have endeared it to you. The trees, the shrubs, the flowers, which thou reared with thy own hands — will they not droop and fade away sooner upon thy departure? — Who will be thy successor to nurse them in thy absence? — Thou wilt leave thy name upon the myrtle-tree. — If trees, and shrubs, and flowers, could compose an elegy, I should expect a very plaintive one upon this subject.

Adieu, adieu! Believe me ever, ever thine,

L. STERNE.

LETTER V

To the Reverend Mr. Blackburne, Archdeacon of Cleveland, at Richmond

SUTTON, November 3, 1750.

DEAR SIR, —

Being Last Thursday at York to preach The Dean's Turn, Hilyard the Bookseller who had spoke to me last Week about Preaching Yrs In Case You should not come Yrself Told me, He had Just got a Letter from You directing him to get It supplied — But with an Intimation, That if I undertook it, That it might be done in such a Way, as that it might not Disoblige your Friend the Precentor. If my Doing it for You in any Way Could possibly have endangerd that, My Regard to You on all Accounts is such, That You may depend upon it, No Consideration whatever would have made me offer my Services, nor would I upon any Invitation have accepted it, Had You incautiously press'd it upon me; And therefore that my Undertaking it at all upon Hilyards telling me He Should want a Preacher, was from a Knowledge, That as it could not in

Reason, So it would not in Fact, give the least Handle to what You apprehended. I would not Say this from bare Conjecture, but known Instances, having preachd for so many of Dr Sternes most Intimate Friends since our Quarrel without their Feeling the Least Marks or most Distant Intimation That He took it unkindly. In which You will the readier believe Me, from the following convincing Proof, That I have preached the 29th of May, the Precentor's own Turn, for these two last Years together (not at his Request, for we are not upon Such Terms) But at the Request of Mr Berdmore whom He desired to get them taken Care of, which He did, By applying Directly to me without the least Apprehension or Scruple — And If my preaching it the first Year had been taken Amiss, I am morally certain That Mr Berdmore who is of a gentle and pacific Temper would not have ventured to have askd me to preach it for him the 2d Time, which I did without any Reserve this last Summer. The Contest between Us, no Doubt, has been Sharp, But has not been made more so, by bringing our mutual Friends into it, Who in all Things, (except Inviting us to the same Dinner) have generally bore them-

selves towards Us, as if this Misfortune had never happend, & this, as on my side, so I am willing to suppose on His, without any alteration of our Opinions of them, unless to their Honor & Advantage. I thought it my Duty to Let You know, How this Matter stood, to free You of any unnecessary Pain, which my preaching for You might Occasion Upon this Score, Since upon all others I flatter myself You would be Pleased, As in genl it is not only More for the Credit of the Church, But of the Prebendy himself who is absent, to have his Place supplied by a Preby of the Church where he can be Had, rather than by Another, tho' of equal Merit.

I told You above, That I had had a Conference with Hilyard upon this Subject, and indeed should have Said to him, most of what I have said to You, But that the Insufferableness of his Behavour put it out of my Power. The Dialogue between Us had something singular in it, and I think I cannot better make You amends for this irksome Letter, than by giving You a particular Acct of it & the Manner I found myself Obliged to treat Him wch By the By, I should have done with still more Roughness But that He shelterd

Himself under the Character of Yr Plenipo, How far His Excellency exceeded his Instruction You will perceive I know, from the Acct I have given of the Hint in your Letter wch was all the Foundation for what passd. I step'd into his Shop, just after Sermon on *All Saints*, When with an Air of much Gravity and Importance, He beckond me to follow Him into an inner Room; No sooner had he shut the Dore, But with the awful Solemnity of a Premier who held a Lettre de Chachêt upon whose Contents my Life or Liberty depended — after a Minuts Pause, — He thus opens his Commission. Sir —— My Friend the A. Deacon of Cleveland not caring to preach his Turn, as I conjectured, Has left me to provide a Preacher, — But before I can take any Steps in it with Regard to You — I want first to know, Sir, upon what Footing You and Dr Sterne are? — upon what Footing! — Yes Sir, How your Quarel stands? — Whats that to you? — How our Quarrel stands! Whats that to You, you Puppy? But Sir, Mr Blackburn would know —— What's that to Him? — But Sir, dont be angry, I only want to know of You, whether Dr Sterne will not be displeased in Case You should preach — Go Look; Ive just now been

preaching and You could not have fitter Opportunity to be satisfyed,— I hope, Mr Sterne, You are not Angry. Yes I am; But much more astonished at your *Impudence.* I know not whether the Chancellors stepping in at this Instant & flapping to the Dore, Did not save his tender Soul the Pain of the last Word; However that be, He retreats upon this unexpected Rebuff, Takes the Chancellr aside, asks his Advice, comes back Submissive, begs Quarter, tells me Dr Hering had quite satisfyed him as to the Grounds of his Scruple (tho' not of his Folly) and therefore beseeches me to let the Matter pass, & to preach the Turn. When I — as Percy complains in Harry 4 *

> ——— All smarting with my Wounds
> To be thus pesterd by a Popinjay
> Out of my Grief and my Impatience
> Answerd neglectingly, I know not what
> ——— for he made me Mad
> To see him shine so bright & smell so sweet
> & Talk so like a waiting Gentlewoman
> — Bid him be Gone — & seek Another fitter for his
> [*Turn*

But as I was too angry to have the perfect Faculty of recollecting Poetry, however pat to my Case so I was forced to tell him in plain

* Carelessly quoted from Shakespeare's *Henry IV., Part I.*, Act I., Scene III.

Prose tho' somewhat elevated — That I would not preach, & that he might get a Parson wh[erever he]* could find one. But upon Reflection, That Don Joh[n Hilyard]* certainly exceeded his Instructions, and finding it [to]* be just so, as I suspected — There being nothing in y^r^ Letter but a Cautious Hint — And being moreover satisfyed in My mind, from this & twenty other Instances of the same kind, That this Impertinence of his like many Others, had Issued not so much from his Heart, as from his Head, The Defects of which no one in Reason is Accountable for, I thought sh^d^ wrong myself to remember it, and Therefore I parted friends & told him I would take Care of the Turn, wch I shall do with Pleasure.

It is Time to beg Pardon of You for troubling You with so long a Letter upon so little a Subject — which as it has proceeded from the Motive I have told You of ridding You of Uneasiness, together with a Mixture of Ambition not to lose either the Good Opinion, or the outward Marks of it, from any Man of worth & Character, till I have done something to forfeit them, I know your Justice will Excuse.

* The manuscript is here cut away.

I am, Revd Sir, with true Esteem & Regard, of wch I beg you'l Consider this Letter as a Testimony.

Y^{r} faithful & most aff^{te}
Humble Servt
LAU: STERNE.

PS

Our Dean arrives here on Saturday.
My Wife sends her Resp^{ts} to You & Y^{r} Lady.

I have broke open this Letter, to tell You, That as I was Going with it to the Post, I encounterd Hilyard, who desired me in the most pressing Manner, not to let this Affair Transpire —& that You might by no means be made acquainted with it — I therefore beg, you will never let him feel the Effects of it, or even Let him know, You knew ought about it — for I half promissed him, — tho' as the Letter was wrote, I could but send it for your own Use — So beg it may not hurt him, by any Ill Impression, as he has Convinced all It proceeded only from Lack of Judgm^{t}

LETTER VI *

To the Same

SUTTON, November 12, 1750.

DEAR SIR, — When I set pen to paper in my last there was much less of spleen at the bottom of my Heart than there was of desire (as I hinted then) to have your good opinion — you tell me I have that, and I assure you there is no Man's I am prouder of: — How much I am sure it will add to what little reputation I have, I will not offend you by declaring; I am certain that a Person who could drop so modest a hint of the little importance he was of can be no good judge of the matter, and as it will be impossible to convince him of it, I must rest satisfied with showing him at least what a price I set upon it by my endeavours on all occasions to keep and improve it.

As for the future supply of any of your vacant turns you may be assured I should be willing to undertake them whenever you want a proxy, and if you have no friend you would choose to put up, you would even do me a

* As the editor was unable to obtain a copy of this letter, he has printed so much of it as is given by Mr. Fitzgerald.

favor to let me have them — I say a favor, For, by the by, my Daughter will be Twenty Pounds a better Fortune by the favors I've received of this kind from the Dean & Residentiaries this Year, and as so much at least is annually & without much trouble to be picked up in our Pulpit, by any man who cares to make the Sermons. You who are a Father will easily guess & as easily excuse my motive.

I was extremely sensible of how much I owed to so friendly a wish, when you told me last summer how glad you would be to promote a Reconciliation, which had the rapidity of my conference given me the least leisure to have thought on, I could not have uttered so undeserved and fast a reply as I did (what is that, &c.) which though directly meant as a rebuke to Hilyard, Yet I am even sorry the expression escaped me. It was my anger and not me, so I beg this may go to sleep in peace with the rest which I never had an inclination or even a power to remember, had you not desired it * * * *

LETTER VII

Dr. Jaques Sterne to Archdeacon Blackburne

York, December 6, 1750.

Mr Jaques Sterne

GOOD Mr ARCHDEACON,

reprobation of his

I wil beg Leave to rely upon Your Pardon

nephew Yorrick. —

for taking the Liberty I do with you in rela-

& mention of

tion to your Turns of preaching in the Minster.

the Popish nunnery

What occasions it is, Mr Hillyard's employing

at York. ——*

the last time the Only person unacceptable to me in the whole Church, an ungrateful & unworthy Nephew of my own, the Vicar of Sutton; and I shoud be much obligd to you, if you woud please either to appoint any person Yourself, or leave it to Your Register to appoint One when you are not here If any of my turns woud Suit you better than Your Own, I woud change with you.

* This interlinear description of the letter is in another hand.

I cannot write to so good a Protestant without taking occasion to let you know how my causes, with the Popish Nunnery here, go on. We have had an Hearing at Dr^s^ Commons, & Dr. Lee opend it in a facetious, & I think not a very becoming manner — He said he was sorry the Clergy of York had occasion to have recourse to such rough methods of making Converts of the Ladies — that the Laws for establishing the Reformation were now grown obsolete & out of date, & the present age too polite & refind to mind or Submit to such old unfashionable proceedings — But I hope the Judges in this Commission of Delegates are not such fine Gentlemen; but that they wil treat the Laws of their Country with more reverence, and Consider the Tendency of the Appeal: It may be ludicrously said, why shoud the Public be in Danger of being put into a flame upon the account of two or three old women, but the Serious way of putting it is, whether there shal be a Popish Seminary set up for poisoning the minds of the King's Subjects & drawing them from their Allegiance, in every Town in the Kingdom. I doubt not but to be able to support the Decree in the Court of York, which was a very mild

one, and I liked it the better for being so. Their Collusive Conviction at the Sessions I hope wil not avail them, for there was certainly a new offence created upon the Statute of the 23d of Eliz: by a twelvemonth's absence, which was not satisfied by the 12 pence a Sunday; and the Ordinary had doubtless sufficient Evidence before him to justify him in taking care of their future Behaviour by a Monition, tho' Dr Lee was pleasd to treat it as an old Stale Ecclesiastical trick. I hope I shal soon have it in my power to prove these innocent Ladies (as some have represented them) guilty of a most treasonable Correspondence, during the late Rebellion, with a Seminary of Jesuits in Scotland, & with a Seminary Abroad, in which the Head of the Nunnery here stild herself Abbess tho' a noble Lord in Your Archdeaconry laid his hand upon his Heart, & assurd me, upon his Honour, that it was no Religious House. When I am come at the Proof, I wil let you know it.

Dr Topham acquainted me with the handsome & kind mention you made of me in Your Charge, and I beg leave to thank you for Your good Opinion — But Believe me,

I had infinitely more Pleasure in hearing of Other parts of Your Charge to the Clergy.

I am, Dear Sr
Your most obedient
& obligd Servant
JAQUES STERNE.

My Causes with the Nunnery are to come on at Sergeants Inn in Hilary Term —

LETTER VIII

To Dr. Jaques Sterne

April 5, 1751.

Sir, — Tis now three years since I troubled you with a letter in vindication of myself in regard of my Mother, in which that I might give you all imaginable conviction, how barbarously she had dealt by me, & at the same time how grossly she had deceived you by the misrepresentation which I found she had made of my behaviour towards her — I desired my wife might have leave to wait upon you to lay the state of our circumstances fairly before you, & with that the account of what we had done for my Mother, that from a view of both together you might be *convinced* how much my Mother has complained *without reason.*

My motive for offering to send my wife rather than myself, upon this particular business, being first merely to avoid the occasion of any heat which might arise betwixt you & me upon any thing foreign to the Errand, which might possibly disapoint the end of it, — & secondly as I had reason to think your passions were pre-engaged in this affair & that the re-

spect you owed my wife as a gentlewoman would be a check against their breaking out; & consequently that you would be more likely to give her a candid hearing which was all I wished, & indeed all, that a plain story to be told without Art or Management could possibly stand in want of. As you had thought proper to concern yourself in my Mothers complaints against me, I took it for granted you *could* not deny me so plain a piece of Justice, so that when you wrote me word back by my servant " You desired to be excused from any conference with my wife, but that I might appear before you." As I foresaw such an Interview with the sense I had of such a treatment was likely to produce nothing but an angry expostulation (which could do no good, but might do hurt) I begged *in my turn* to be excused, & as you had already refused so unexceptionable an offer of hearing my defence, I supposed in course you would be silent for ever after upon that Head, & therefore I concluded with saying as I was under no necessity of applying to you, & wanted no man's direction or Advice in my own private concerns I would make myself as easy as I could with the consciousness of having done my Duty & of being

able to prove I had whenever I thought fit & for the future that I was determined never to give you any further trouble upon the subject.

In this resolution I have kept for three years & should have continued to the end of my life — but being told of late by some of my friends that this clamour has been kept up against me, & by as singular a Stroke of Ill design as could be levelled against a defenceless man, who lives retired in the country & has few opportunities of disabusing the world; that my Mother has moreover been fixed in that very place where a hard report might do me (as a Clergyman) the most real disservice. — I was roused by the advice of my friends to think of some way of defending myself which I own I should have set about immediately by telling my story publickly to the world but for the following inconvenience, that I could not do myself justice this way without doing myself an injury at the same time by laying open the nakedness of my circumstances, which for aught I knew was likely to make me suffer more in the opinion of one half of the world than I could possibly gain from the other part of it by the clearest defence that could be made.

Under the distress of this vexatious alternative I went directly to my old friend & College acquaintance, our worthy Dean, & laid open the hardship of my situation, begging his advice what I should best do to extricate myself. His opinion was that there was nothing better than to have a Meeting, face to face with you, & my Mother, & with his usual friendship & humanity he undertook to use his best offices to procure it for me.

Accordingly about 3 months ago he took an opportunity of making you this request which he told me you desired only to defer till the hurry of your Nunnery cause was over.

Since the determination of that affair he has put you in mind of what you gave me hopes of, but without success; you having (as he tells me) absolutely refused now to hear one word of what I have to say. The denying me this piece of common right is the hardest measure that a man in my situation could receive, & though the whole inconvenience of it may be thought to fall as intended, directly upon me, yet I wish Dr. Sterne, a great part of it may not rebound upon yourself. For why, may any one ask why will you interest

yourself in a complaint against your Nephew if you are determined against hearing what he has to say for himself? — & if you thus deny him every opportunity he seeks of doing himself justice. Is it not too plain you do not wish to find him justified, or that you do not care to lose the uses of such a handle against him? However it may seem to others, the case appearing in this light to me it has determined me contrary to my former promise "of giving you no further trouble" — to add this, which is not to solicit again what you have denyed me to the Dean, (for after what I have felt from so hard a Treatment, I would not accept of it, should the Offer come now from yourself.) But my intent is by a plain & honest narrative of my Behaviour, & my Mother's too, to disarm you for the future; being determined since you would not hear me face to face with my accusers, that you shall not go unconvinced or at least not uninformed of the true state of the Case.

It is not necessary for my Defence to go so far back as the loss of my Father, y^r^ brother, whose death left me at the age of 16 without one shilling in the world, & I may add *at that time* without one Friend in it except my

cousin Sterne of Elvington, who became a father to me, & to whose protection *then* I chiefly owe what I now am; for as you absolutely refused giving me any aid at my Father's death, you are sensible without *his* I should have been driven out naked into the world, young as I was, to have shifted for myself as well as I could.

It is not necessary I say for my defence to go so far back, nor do I recall it to your Memory by way of recrimination for any seeming cruelty of yours towards me then (for the favours I received after gave me reason to forget it), & besides I think you were the best judge of what you had to do in such a case & were only accountable to God & your own conscience. But I previously touch upon this particular for the sake of a single reflection which I shall make & turn to my account bye & bye.

My father as you remember died in the King's service in the West Indies. My mother was then with her own relations in Ireland, & upon the first news of his death came over to England. She was then in some difficulties about her pension & her business was with you to solicit your interest to procure it for her upon the English establishment.

But I well remember she was forced to return back without having so much interest as to obtain the favour of being admitted to your presence (not being suffered even to reach York) — When she came this 2^{d} time from Ireland to Chester, & from thence to York to raise this clamour against me, she found no difficulties of this kind — was openly received by you ; which I have put you in mind of to observe to you, from what the different reception she met with from you in these two instances seems evidently to have sprung. In this last application she came recommended to your compassion with a complaint against *me.* In the former she had nothing to move you but the *real* distress of her condition. But this by the way.

From my Fathers death to the time I settled in the world which was 11 years, my Mother lived in Ireland, & as during all that time I was not in a condition to furnish her with money, I seldom heard from her, & when I did the account I generally had was, that by the help of an Embroidery school that she kept, & by the punctual payment of her pension which is 20*l.* a year she lived well, & would have done so to this hour had not the news that I

had married a woman of fortune hastened her over to England.

She has told you it seems that she left Ireland then upon my express invitation —

'Tis an absolute falsehood, & even so far from probability, that the character which both you & Mrs Custobadie had given me & my wife of her clamorous & rapacious temper, made us live in perpetual dread of her thrusting herself upon us. Of the truth of what I have told you let the following step I took be considered as a convincing proof.

The very hour I received notice of her landing at Liverpool I took post to prevent her coming nearer me, stayed three days with her used all the arguments I could fairly to engage her to return to Ireland, & end her days with her own relations.

I convinced her that besides the interest of my wife's fortune, I had then but a bare hundred pounds a year ; out of which my ill health obliged me to keep a curate, that we had moreover ourselves to keep, & in that sort of decency which left it not in our power to give her much ; that what we could spare she should as certainly receive in Ireland as here ; that the place she had left was a cheap country — her

native one, & where she was sensible 20*l.* a year was more than equal to 30 here, besides the discount of having her pension paid in England where it was not due & the utter impossibility I was under of making up so many deficiencies.

I concluded with representing to her the inhumanity of a Mother *able* to maintain herself, thus forcing herself as a burden upon a Son who was scarce able to support himself without breaking in upon the future support of another person whom she might imagine was much dearer to me.

In short I summed up all those arguments with making her a present of 20 guineas, which with a present of Cloathes &c which I had given her the day before, I doubted not would have the effect I wanted. But I was much mistaken, for though she heard me with attention, yet as soon as she had got the money into her pocket, she told me with an air of the utmost insolence "That as for going back to live in Ireland, she was determined to show me no such sport, that she had found I had married a wife who had brought me a fortune, & she was resolved to enjoy her share of it, & live the rest of her days at her ease either at York or Chester. ["]

I need not swell this letter with all I said upon the unreasonableness of such a determination; it is sufficient to inform you that all I did say proving to no purpose I was forced to leave her in her resolution, & notwithstanding so much provocation I took my leave with assuring her "That though my Income was strait I should not forget I was a son, though she had forgot she was a *mother*.["]

From Liverpool as she had determined she went with my sister to fix at Chester, where though she had little just grounds for such an expectation she found me better than my word for we were kind to me [*sic*] above our power, & common justice to ourselves, & though it went hard enough down with us to reflect we were supporting both her and my sister in the pleasures & advantages of a township which for prudent reasons we denied ourselves, yet still we were weak enough to do it for 5 years together though I own not without continual remonstrances on my side as well as perpetual clamours on theirs, which you will naturally imagine to have been the case when all that was given was thought as much above reason by the one, as it fell *below* the Expectations of the other.

In this situation of things betwixt us, in the year 44 my sister was sent from Chester by order of my mother to York, that she might make her complaints to you, & engage you to second them in these unreasonable claims upon us.

This was the intent of her coming, though the pretence of her journey (of which I bore the expences) was to *make* a months visit to me, or rather a month's experiment of my further weakness. —— She stayed her time or longer — was received by us with all kindness, was sent back at my own charge with my own servant & horses, with 5 guineas which I gave her in her pocket, & a six & thirty piece which my wife put into her hand as she took horse.

In what light she represented so much affection & generosity I refer to your memory of the account she gave you of it in her return through York. But for very strong reasons I believe she concealed from you all that was necessary to make a proper handle of us both; which double Game by the bye, my Mother has played over again upon us, for the same purposes since she came to York, of which you will see a proof by & bye.

But to return to my sister. As we were not

able to give her a fortune, & were as little able to maintain her as she expected — therefore as the truest mark of our friendship in such a situation my wife & self took no small pains, the time she was with us to turn her thoughts to some way of depending upon her own industry in which we offered her all imaginable assistance. 1st by proposing to her that if she would set herself to learn the business of a Mantuamaker, as soon as she could get insight enough into it to make a Gown & set up for herself " *That* we would give her 30*l.* to begin the world & support her till business fell in; or if she would go into a Milliner's shop in London my wife engaged not only to get her into a shop where she should have 10*l.* a year wages, but to equip her with cloathes &c properly for the place, or lastly if she liked it better as my Wife had then an opportunity of recommending her to the family of one of the first of our Nobility — she undertook to get her a creditable place in it where she would receive no less than 8 or 10*l.* a year wages with other advantages.["] My sister showed no seeming opposition to either of the two last proposals till my wife had wrote & got a favourable answer to the one, & an immediate offer of the

other. It will astonish you, Sir, when I tell you she rejected them with the utmost scorn, telling me I might send my own children to service when I had any, but for her part as she was the daughter of a gentleman *she would not disgrace* herself but would live as such. Notwithstanding so absurd an instance of her folly which might have disengaged me from any further concern, yet I persisted in doing what I thought was right, & though after this the tokens of our kindness were neither so great nor so frequent as before, yet nevertheless we continued sending what we could conveniently spare.

It is not usual to take receipts for presents made; so that I have not many vouchers of that kind, & my Mother has more than once denyed the money I have sent her, even to my own face, I have little expectation of such acknowledgements as she ought to make. But this I solemnly declare upon the nearest computation we can make, that in money, cloaths, & other presents we are more than 90*l.* poorer for what we have given & remitted to them. In one of the remittances (which was the summer [of] my sisters visit) & which as I remember was a small bill drawn for 3*l.* by Mr Ricord

upon Mr. Boldero, after my Mother had got the money in Chester for the bill, she peremptorily denied the receipt of it. I naturally supposed some mistake of Mr. Ricord in directing — However that she might not be a sufferer by the disappointment I immediately sent another bill for as much more; but withal said as Mr. Ricord could prove his sending her the bill, I was determined to trace out *who* had got my money, upon which she wrote word back that she had received it herself but had *forgot it.* You will the more readily believe this when I inform you, that in Decr 47 when my Mother went to your house to complain, she could not get a *farthing* from me that she carried with her *Tenguineas* in her pocket, which I had given her but two days before. If she could *forget* such a sum, I had reason to *remember* it, for when I gave it I did not leave myself one guinea in the house to befriend my wife, though then within one day of her labour, & under an apparent necessity of a man-midwife to attend her.

What *uses* she made of this ungenerous concealment I refer again to yourself — But I suppose they were the same as in my sisters case, to make a penny of us both.

When I gave her this sum I desired she would go & acquaint you with it, & moreover took that occasion to tell her I would give her 8*l.* every year whilst I lived. The week after she wrote me word she had been with you, & was determined not to accept that offer unless I would settle the 8*l.* upon her out of my Wife's fortune, & chargeable upon it in case my wife should be left a widow. This she added was *your* particular advice, which without better evidence I am not yet willing to believe; because though you do not yet know the particulars of my Wife's fortune — you must know so much of it, was such an event as my death to happen shortly, without such a burden as this upon my widow & my child, *that Mrs Sterne would be as much distressed, & as undeservedly so as any widow in Gt. Britain:* & though I know as well as you & my Mother that I have a *power in law* to lay her open to all the terrors of such a melancholy situation — that I feel I have *no power* in equity or in conscience to do so; & I will add in her behalf, considering how much she has merited at my hands as the best of wives, that was I capable of being worried into so cruel a measure as to give away hers, & her child's bread upon the

clamour which you & my Mother have raised — that I should not only be the weakest but the *worst man* that ever woman trusted with all she had.

I do remember, Sir, when I married I acquainted you that Mrs Sterne refused to have her own fortune settled upon her, & wished for no better security than my honour; to which you *then* answered. "*I was the more bound to take care, that the Lady should be no sufferer by such a mark of her confidence.*" She never shall through my fault, though she has through my misfortune & that long train of difficulties & drawbacks with which you know I began the world, as namely the whole debt of my school education, cloathing &c for nine years to-gether which came upon me the moment I was able to pay it — To this a great part of the expense of my education at the University, too scantily defrayed by my Cousin Sterne with only 30*l.* a year & the last year not payed, but with the money I borrowed. The expenses of coming into my preferments the great repairs of a large ruinous house upon my living, — the entire furnishing of it when I had done — the want of good health for many years — perhaps with it, the want of all that good management in be-

ginning the world with which I hope to end it. — To all which let me add the continual drain from my mother. All these together though I hold myself not accountable to any person, but One who will ever be the first to do me justice — all these to-gether have so broke in upon that fortune which *you* recommended to my care that I will trust you a secret concerning it which is this that was I, Sir, to die this night, I have not more than the very Income of 20*l.* a year (which my mother enjoys) to divide equally betwixt my Wife, a helpless child, & perhaps a third unhappy sharer, that might come into the world some months after its father's death to claim its part.

The false modesty of not being able to declare this, has made me thus long a prey to my Mother, & to this clamour raised against me; & since I have made known thus much of my condition as an honest man, it becomes me to add, *that I think I have no right* to apply one shilling of my Income to any other purpose but that of laying by a provision for my wife & child: & that it will be time enough (if then) to add somewhat to my Mothers pension of 20*l.* a year when I have as much to leave my Wife, who besides the duties I owe her of a

Husband & the father of a dear child, has this further claim; — that she whose bread I am thus defending was the person who brought it into the family, & whose birth & education would ill enable her to struggle in the world without it — that the other person who now claims it from her, & has raised us so much sorrow upon that score brought not one sixpence into the family — & though it would give me pain enough to report it upon any other occasion, that she was the daughter of no other than a poor Suttler who followed the camp in Flanders was neither born nor bred to the expectation of a 4th part of that the government allows her; & therefore has reason to be contented with such a provision, though double the sum would be nakedness to my wife.

I suppose this representation will be a sufficient answer to any one who expects no more from a man, than what the difficulties under which he acts will enable him to perform. For those who expect more, I leave them to their expectations & conclude this long & hasty wrote letter, with declaring that the relation in which I stand to you inclines me to exclude you from the number of the last. For notwithstanding the hardest measure that ever man received

continued on your side without any provocation on mine without ever once being told my fault, or conscious of even committing one which deserved an unkind look from you — notwithstanding this, & the bitterness of 10 years unwearied persecution, that I retain that sense of the service you did me at my first setting out in the world, which becomes a man inclined to be grateful, & that I am

Sir,

your once much obliged though now
your much injured nephew
LAURENCE STERNE

SUTTON ON THE FOREST
April 5 1751 *

* Copied by permission of Mr Rob. Cole of Upper Norton Street from a copy carefully made by some person for Mr Godfrey Borvik formerly of Gunthwaite & bought by Mr Cole with many other papers of the Borviks July 25, 1851. — Note to the copy of this letter in the British Museum.

LETTER IX

To the Reverend Mr. Blake *

[Sutton.]

Dear Blake, — It is not often, if ever, I differ much from you in my judgment of things, therefore you must bear with me now in remonstrating against the impropriety of my coming just at this *crisis*. You have happily now concluded this affair, wch has been so often upon the eve of breaking off, and my coming would be the most *unseasonable* visit ever paid by mortal man. Consider in what light Mrs. Ash and Miss must have hitherto look'd upon me, and should it ever come to light that I had posted over upon this termination of y^r^ differences, I know it would naturally alarm them, and raise a suspicion I had come over to embroil matters. Things being already settled, 'twould be thought I could have no other

* With the exception of that numbered XII., the Blake Letters, as printed by Mr. Fitzgerald, are undated. But the date which that one bears — July 5, 1758 — indicates the period to which they all belong — the years before the publication of *Tristram Shandy*, while Sterne was occupied with preaching and farming at Sutton. During most of the time covered by this fragmentary correspondence, he was also playing the part of confidential friend to Mr. Blake, who was meeting with mysterious difficulties in a courtship of Miss Ash.

errand. But you seem to have a forboding of the same evil by y^r^ desiring me to come *privately.* I have weighed the point wth my wife a full hour, and she thinks we should not stake the disgust y^t^ may possibly be given upon the *chance* of my coming being kept a secret; for if I come to-night I must stay all night, wch will discover it. If, to-morrow morning, both roads and streets will be full, as 'tis Martinmas day, and I declare I would not have my being with you known over the way for fifty pounds. I know you will do me the justice to believe I would run 7 times as far any other road to do you a 7th part of the kindness you ask. But I verily believe, w^ch^, by the by, makes me easy at heart, in my present staying at home, that you will do as well without me. If I can be of service, it must be in case some unforseen objection sh^d^ arise in either party, when you may whistle me to you in a moment's warning. However, my dear friend, if, after all, you think it necessary for you that we should have an hour's talk, I will give up my own judgm^t^ to y^rs^, and come over early to-morrow morning, tho' I rather wish, as does my wife, you would be ruled by us; and depend upon y^r^ own good abilities, w^ch^, I'm sure, are sufficient to carry you

thro' now with *safety* and honor. I send my service to no mortal soul — and pray command y^r people to say nothing of y^r lad's being here to-day. I wish to God you could some day ride out next week, and breakfast and dine with us, w^ch, if you do, it would be wise, in my opinion, to make *no secret* of it, but tell the ladies you are going to take a ride to Sutton, to carry the welcome news to y^r friends, that every thing was happily concluded. Dear sir, accept our most hearty congratulations upon it, and believe me.

Y^rs most truly,

LAU^E STERNE.

P. S. — My servant is in town to-night, and will be in town to-morrow, when I will order him to wait upon you. I had collected all your letters, and burn't them before I rec^d y^rs.

LETTER X

To the Same

[SUTTON.]

MY DEAR FRIEND, — We have ponder'd over the contents of y^rs again and again, and after the coolest and most candid consideration of

every movement throughout this affair, the whole appears, what I but too shrewdly suspected, a contexture of plots agst y^{r} fortune and person, grand mama standing first in the dramatis personae, the Loup Garóu or raw head and bloody bones to frighten Master Jacky into silence, and make him go to bed with Missy, *supperless* and in peace — Stanhope, the lawyer, behind the scenes, ready to be call'd in to do his part, either to frighten or outwit you, in case the terror of grand mama should not do the business without him. Miss's part was to play them off upon y^{r} good nature in their turns, and give proper reports how the plot wrought. But more of this allegory another time. In the meanwhile, our stedfast council and opinion is, to treat wth Stanhope upon no terms either in person or proxy. Consider the case a moment — Your proposals (wch I trust will be soon offered by you to Mrs Ash in writing) will either be accepted or refused by her at first sight. If they are accepted, he is not wanted to be treated with. If they are rejected, he is the most improper man. The person call'd in such a case sh^{d} be *your* friend, not one who will widen the breach and fortify them in their opiniatre,

but a cordial, kind body who will soften matters and lessen the distance between you. Such a one is not Stanhope, nor could be in honor either as their kinsman or council. So I beg leave to repeat it again, keep clear of him by all means, and for this additional reason, namely, that was he call'd in either at first or last, you lose the advantage as well as opportunity of an honor^{ble} retreat wch is in y^{r} power the moment they reject y^{r} proposals, but will never be so again after you refer to him.

I am, dear S^{r},
most truly Y^{rs},
L. STERNE.

LETTER XI

To the Same

[SUTTON,] Saturday.

DEAR SIR, — My wife sends you and Mrs. Ash a couple of stubble geese — one for each; she would have sent you a couple, but thinks 'tis better to keep y^{r} other Goose in our Bean Stubble till another week. All we can say in their behalf is, that they are (if not very fat) at least in good health & in perfect *freedome*, for they have never been confined a

moment; I wish I could say as much of yr worship — for I fear yr affairs, as heretofore, confine & keep you in the dark, and if I am any conjurer, you are at this hour, just where I left you (if you will allow a pun) STAND HOPEing yourself to death — was there ever so vile a conundrum? Pray God, that may be the worst on't, so believe me to be, what I truly am,

Yrs cordially,

L. STERNE.

P. S. — As the goose is for yr mistress, my wife says, you must take the worst and send her the best, & that the next shall be better.

I preach on Sunday at the Cathedral. Will you give me a breakfast, if I get to York early? Or will you be out of town?

LETTER XII

To the Same

SUTTON, July 5, 1758.

DEAR SIR, — I see how your affairs approach to such a crisis, that no friendly office can be witheld by one who wishes you so well. But let me tell you the state of our affairs. To morrow we are indispensably obliged to be at

Newborough (L^{d} F—g's) on Friday my wife has engaged herself in the afternoon at Cowper's — & I had both set my heart upon going to the Concert, & sent to engage Mr. Fothergill to meet me there a little after three. However, from eleven that day to three, both me and my rib are at y^{r} service to club our understandings all together, and I'm sure we shall all be able in 4 hours to digest a much harder plann & settle it to y^{rs} and all our wishes; however, if any our plann should require a 2^{d} consideration we purpose being at Newbury on Saturday to see y^{r} Patron pass by, & you will know where to find me in case a half hours further conference should be wanted: If after these preliminaries are settled, I can be of use to you, you know you have no more to do but command me, & I shall be any day the week following at y^{r} service, except Munday which is our Appeal day for the Land Tax.

We thank you for y^{r} kindness in speaking for Mr Hungton. (?) But we have plann'd it better.

All our kind wishes & complim^{ts} to you & the ladies, with service to Mr Lowther,

Y^{rs} very truly.

L. STERNE.

LETTER XIII

To the Same

[Sutton.]

Dear Blake, — I send my Amen to enquire after you, never yet having been able upon any acct to get to you, the great confusion of *the Election* wch I hate as much as my friend Taylor does, kept me here during that period — & bad weather, bad roads, not good health, & much business, will not let me come for so long as I must stay when I do get to you, wch must be for 2 or 3 days — whether I will or no, I am forced out of *my shell* in Xmas week to preach Innts.* I hope all goes on successfully with you & yrs since the age I've had the pleasure of seeing you — pray let me know it is so, & present all kind respts to Miss C. &c. Pray tell me how long the Dean stays if you can — & if Taylor is in Town to whom my best services — If you have 3 or 4 of the last Yorks Courants, pray send one [to] us, for we are as much strangers to all that has pass'd amongst you as if we were in a mine in Siberia.

* Perhaps the Sermon numbered XV.

My wife & Lydia send all kind loves to you. —

I am truly yours,
L. STERNE.

I hope you got y^r^ coat home safe, tho' in what plight I fear as it was a rainy night & ten o'clock at night before we reach'd Sutton, oweing to vile accidents to wch Journiers are exposed.

Will you be so kind as to forward the note to Mr Cowpers any time before noon.

There is no note enclosed. I am, dear Sir, Your much obliged & faithful,
L. S.

LETTER XIV

To the Same

[SUTTON,] Monday.

DEAR SIR, — I have transacted my Bristol Affair all but a small point left for y^r^ good nature, wch is to put letter in the Post to day & pay *postige yourself* for it to Mr Oldfield for wch I've inclosed 8^d^ it being a double letter. If Oldfield s^d^ suspect 3 letters instead of two you may open it to convince him. But I think he will take your word, tho' perhaps not a Ser-

vant's. The Express (when God sends it) Monsr. Apothecary will direct as agreed upon between us, & I think I have put the whole into such a train that I cannot well miscarry.

LETTER XV

To the Same

[Sutton.]

Dear Sir, — I should have beat up y^{r}. quarters before now, & but for the vile roads & weather, together with the *crisis* of my affairs namely the getting down my crop wch. by the way is in danger of sprouting. However, I will come over at y^{r}. desire, but it cannot be to-morrow because all hands are to be employed in cutting my barly wch. is now shaking with this vile wind — however the next day (Friday) I will be with you by twelve & eat a portion of y^{r}. own dinner & confer till 3 o'clock, in case the day is fair, if not the day after, &c., &c. My wife is engaged to dine at Cowpers the first travelleable day & comes with me. I think M^{r}. Moor will not expect (w^{t}. his letter does not require) an answer — however, will overhaul y^{r}. matter with all others.

My wife sends her comp^{s}. & what is more her wishes for you in this crisis of y^{r}. distemper wch. I wish likewise was well got over. For 'tis full of mystery and I think cannot end as we all once hoped and expected,

Believe me, Dear Sir,
most truly y^{rs}.,
L. STERNE.

5 o'clock. — I beg pardon for detain^{g}. y^{r}. stockings wch. was the Maid's forgetfulness but she has a sweetheart in her head, wch. puts all other things out, this I'm sure you'l excuse.

LETTER XVI

To the Same

[SUTTON,] Sunday Night.

DEAR SIR, — Not knowing what Day I shall be able to get to York this week, having Business of so many sorts to detain me at home, I have order'd my Sinful Amen to wait upon You, That You might have an Opportunity of writing in Case you durst trust him a 2^{d}. Time or had Leisure as well as courage so to do. When I come, I have 4 personages I equally want to

see. The Dean, Jack Taylor, yrself, & my Mother — & I have much to say to each, How I shall manage all in ye narrow compass of a writers Day, I know not; but when I get to York, I think my first hour will be with you & so on. I believe my wife will be at York on Tuesday, to make her last Marketings for the year. But will dine I dare say with Duke Humphry, as my girl is somewhat relapsing & the Mother you may be sure, not a little impatient to be back; — I wd have wrote on Saturday But in Truth, tho' I had both Time & Inclination, my Servants had neither ye one nor the other, to go a yard out of their Road to deliver it — They having set out with a Wagon Load of Barly at 12 o'clock, & had scarse day to see it measured to the Maltsman. I have 4 Thrashers every Day at work, & they mortify me with declarations, That There is so much Barly they cannot get thro' that speces before Xmas Day, & God knows I have (I hope) near 80 Qrs of Oats besides. How I shall manage matters to get to you, as we wish for 3 months.

I thank God, however, I have settled most of my affairs — let my freehold to a promising tenent — have likewise this week let him the most considerable part of my tyths, and shall

clear my hands and head of all county entanglements, having at present only ten p^{ds} a year in land and seven p^{ds} a year in Corn Tyth left undisposed of, wch shall be quitted with all prudent speed. This will bring me and mine into a narrow compass, and make us, I hope, both rich and happy. 'Tis only to friends we thus unbosome ourselves, so I know you'l excuse and believe me, y^{rs},

L. STERNE.

P. S. — Let me know how your affairs go on, and as distinctly as I have done mine.

LETTER XVII

To the Same

SUTTON, Saturday.

DR SIR, — This should have come to y^{r} hands yesterday morn^{g} (but was disappointed by a fellow who promised to call for it) to have desired y^{r} Indulgences for my not being able to keep my word in being with you as I hoped and intended — nor can we for our souls leave home this day for reasons I shall tell you when I see you wch will be very soon, but I cannot fix wch of the three first days of the week it will be.

It shall be the first in my power, for I want to see you full as much as you do to see me. In the meantime we hope 'twil be no Difference to your affairs whether Munday or Wednesday. My wife I told you is engaged & as I come alone I take pot luck. God bless & direct you in the meantime & believe me yrs

with all respects,

L. STERNE.

To the Revd Mr. Blake.

LETTER XVIII

To the Same

[SUTTON.]

DEAR SIR, — It was very kindly done in you to send me the Letter to Sutton, & I thank you for yt & all other friendly offices. But for the future you shall not be at such a trouble unless something *extraordinary* makes it adviseable, Because as you will always first peruse the accts, I am perfectly easy abt what is in yrs knowing you will do for me as for yrself. You perceive That he will write from time to time to give us a proper preparation in Case the Event shd happen, upon wch prepara-

tion given by him it will be time enough for us to plann something more particular than what is done already, & it will be time enough when he writes me word That He grows worse, to settle the Matter of the Express with him in my Answer to that Acct. My wife joins in her kind Thanks to you with me for this — and I beg you'l

believe me, Yrs,

L. S.

P. S. — We decamp'd in such a Hurry on Sunday morng I could not snatch a moment to run to bid you adieu. But I know You excuse Formalities, wch by the by, I am a most punctilious regarder of wth all. But my friends — Ld Carlisle * I suppose is not dead tho' Irrecoverable.

To The Reverend Mr. Blake.

* Richard Osbaldeston, to whom Sterne dedicated his first printed sermon. He became in turn Bishop of Carlisle and Bishop of London. His critical condition to which reference is made cannot refer to the illness that ended with death in 1764; it must refer to some previous alarm for his life.

LETTER XIX

To the Same

[SUTTON.]

DEAR BLAKE, — Tho I know you could not possibly expect us on so terrible a day as this has fallen out, yet I could do no less than send over on purpose to testify our concern for not being able to get to you. We have waited dress'd and ready to set out ever since nine this morning to 12 in hopes to snatch any intermission of one of the most heavy rains I ever knew, but we are destined not to go for the day grows worse and worse upon our heads, and the sky gathering in on all sides leaves no prospect of any but a most dismal going and coming, and not wthout danger as the roads are full of water. What remains, but that we undress ourselves.

Since you left us, we have considered (you know w^{t}) in all its shapes and circumstances, and the more the whole is weighed, the worse and more insiduous appears every step of the

managem^{t} of that affair. God direct you in it, 'tis our hearty prayer, for I am, with my wife best respects to you,

truly yours,

L. S.

Comp^{t}. to ladies.

LETTER XX*

To ******

[Sutton.]

Sir, — I received the favour of yours; and it will be a great pleasure to me to discharge the neighbourly office you stand in want of to your satisfaction. I have taken proper measures to get chapmen for it, by ordering it to be publicly cried at my two parishes; but I find a greater backwardness amongst my two flocks

* This letter, which, if genuine, must belong to the pre-Shandean period, was first printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1793, with the following introductory passage: —

July 10.

Mr. Urban, — That the celebrated Yorick could, on proper occasion, descend to be a man of business, the following letter of his, to a neighbouring clergyman, will sufficiently evince. It is undated, but was written soon after the publication of the early volumes of Tristram Shandy.

Eugenio.

in this respect than I imagined. This is owing, it seems, to a greater prospect of hay and other fodder than there was any expectation of about five weeks ago, when, they tell me, your crop would have sold for 40*s.* more than at present. I believe there may be some grounds for this; for, all the late mowed meadows produce plenty, of which yours (which was cut last Saturday) will be no unacceptable proof; for, they say, you have as much grass as they could well mow: so that, by their account, the want of the fodder raised the value of the crop. It is now with the utmost difficulty, and a whole mornings waste of my lungs, that I have got two sufficient men of ********** to bid up to what you had offered — twelve pounds. I have put them off under pretence of writing you word; but, in truth, to wait a day or two to try the market, and see what can be got for it. I therefore beg you will write me a line or two for farther directions, which must come soon, for the barley, they inform me, must be cut on Friday or Saturday; so there is no time to lose. If I hear nothing from you, I have but two things to chuse, either to set men to mow it for you, or let the men who bid the most for it take it; though I fear the two men have bid

near all I can get you. I beg my compliments, with my wife, to your lady; and am, Sir, with great esteem, yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXI

To ——— *

SUTTON, Wednesday.

DEAR SIR,—I have sent you a large Quantity of Pepiermint wh I beg you will disstil carefully for me. I observe you do not charge anything in yr letter for the trouble and expense of making the last. I beg you'l not use any ceremony with this, for I hoped you would take it *in pence*. However, you may give Ricord a single bottle, and if yr own shop is destitute of so precious a vehicle, I give you leave to do the same for yourself.

* A chemist or apothecary at York.

LETTERS

LETTER XXII *

To James Dodsley

[York, October ? 1759.]

Sir, — What you wrote to me in June last, in answer to my demand of 50*l.* for the Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy "That it was too much to risk on a single volume, which, if it happened not to sell, would be hard upon your brother" I think a most reasonable objection in him against giving me the price I thought my work deserved. You need not be told by me how much authors are inclined to over-rate their productions: — for my own part, I hope I am no exception; for if I could find out by any arcanum, the precise value of mine, I declare Mr. Dodsley should have it 20 per cent. below its value.

I propose, therefore, to print a lean edition, in two small volumes, of the size of Rasselas, and on the same paper and type, at my own expense, merely to feel the pulse of the world, and that I may know what price to set upon

* Sterne wrote to Dodsley in June, *1759*, offering him the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* for 50*l.* The offer was declined, and this letter is Sterne's reply to Dodsley.

the remaining volumes, from the reception of these. If my book sells and has the run our critics expect, I propose to free myself of all future troubles of this kind, and bargain with you, if possible, for the rest as they come out, which will be every six months. If my book fails of success, the loss falls where it ought to do. The same motives which inclined me first to offer you this trifle, incline me to give you the whole profits of the sale (except what Mr. Kirksman sells here, which will be a great many), and to have them sold only at your shop, upon the usual terms in these cases. The book shall be printed here, and the impression sent up to you; for as I live at York, and shall correct every proof myself, it shall go perfect into the world, and be printed in so creditable a way as to paper, type, &c., as to do no dishonour to you, who, I know, never chuse to print a book meanly. Will you patronize my book upon these terms, and be as kind a friend to it as if you had bought the copyright?

Be so good as to favour me with a line by the return, and believe me,

Sir,

Your obliged and most humble servant,

(Signed) LAURENCE STERNE.

P. S. All locality is taken out of the book — the satire general; notes are added where wanted, and the whole made more saleable — about a hundred and fifty pages added — and to conclude, a strong interest formed and forming in its behalf, which I hope will soon take off the few I shall print on this *coup d'essai.* I had desired Mr. Kirksman to write the purport of this to you by this post, but least he should omit it, or not sufficiently explain my intention, I thought best to trouble you with a letter myself.

Direct for me, *Prebendary of York.*

LETTER XXIII

To Mrs. F[erguson]

York, Tuesday, Nov. 19, 1759.

Dear Madam, — Your kind enquiries after my health, deserve my best thanks. — What can give one more pleasure than the good wishes of those we value? — I am sorry you give so bad an account of your own health, but hope you will find benefit from tar-water — it has been of infinite service to me. — I suppose, my good lady, by what you say in your letter, "that I am busy writing an extraordinary book," that your intelligence comes from York — the fountain-head of all chit-chat news — and — no matter. — Now for your desire of knowing the reason of my turning author? why truly I am tired of employing my brains for other people's advantage. — 'Tis a foolish sacrifice I have made for some years to an ungrateful person. — I depend much upon the candour of the public, but I shall not pick out a jury to try the merit of my book amongst ********, and — till you read my Tristram, do not, like some people, condemn it. — Laugh I am sure

you will at some passages. — I have hired a small house in the Minster Yard for my wife and daughter — the latter is to begin dancing, &c. if I cannot leave her a fortune, I will at least give her an education. —— As I shall publish my works very soon, I shall be in town by March, and shall have the pleasure of meeting with you. —— All your friends are well, and ever hold you in the same estimation that your sincere friend does.

Adieu, dear lady, believe me, with every wish for your happiness, your most faithful, &c.

LAURENCE STERNE.

LETTER XXIV

To Dr. *******

Jan. 30, 1760.

DEAR SIR, — *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is a maxim which you have so often of late urged in conversation, and in your letters (but in your last especially), with such seriousness, and severity against me, as the supposed transgressor of the rule; — that you have made me at length as serious and severe as yourself: — but that the humours you have stirred up might not work too potently within me, I have waited four days to cool myself, before I would set pen to paper to answer you, "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*" I declare I have considered the wisdom and foundation of it over and over again, as dispassionately and charitably as a good Christian can, and, after all, I can find nothing in it, or make more of it, than a nonsensical lullaby of some nurse, put into Latin by some pedant, to be chanted by some hypo-

* This letter was perhaps addressed to Dr. Noah Thomas, a distinguished London physician. Sterne was his frequent guest at Scarborough. — See Joseph Cradock, *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs* (Vol. I. p. 9, London, 1826).

crite to the end of the world, for the consolation of departing lechers. — 'Tis, I own, Latin; and I think that is all the weight it has — for, in plain English, 'tis a loose and futile position below a dispute — "*You are not to speak anything of the dead, but what is good.*" Why so? — Who says so? — neither reason nor Scripture. — Inspired authors have done otherwise — and reason and common-sense tell me, that if the characters of past ages and men are to be drawn at all, they are to be drawn like themselves; that is, with their excellencies, and with their foibles — and it is as much a piece of justice to the world, and to virtue too, to do the one, as the other. — The ruling passion, *et les égarements du cœur*, are the very things which mark, and distinguish a man's character; — in which I would as soon leave out a man's head as his hobby-horse. — However, if like the poor devil of a painter, we must conform to this pious canon, *de mortuis, &c.* which I own has a spice of piety in the *sound* of it, and be obliged to paint both our angels and our devils out of the same pot — I then infer that our Sydenhams, and Sangrados, our Lucretias, and Messalinas, our Sommers, and our Bolingbrokes — are alike entitled to statues,

and all the historians or satirists who have said otherwise since they departed this life, from Sallust to S——e, are guilty of the crimes you charge me with, "cowardice and injustice."

But why cowardice? "because 'tis not courage to attack a dead man who can't defend himself." — But why do you doctors of the faculty attack such a one with your incision-knife? Oh! for the good of the living. — 'Tis my plea. — But I have something more to say in my behalf — and it is this — I am not guilty of the charge — tho' defensible. I have not cut up Dr. Kunastrokius at all. — I have just scratch'd him — and that scarce skin deep. — I do him first all honour — speak of Kunastrokius as a great man — (be he whom he will) and then most distantly hint at a droll foible in his character — and that not first reported (to the few who can even understand the hint) by me — but known before by every chambermaid and footman within the bills of mortality — But Kunastrokius, you say, was a great man — 'tis that very circumstance which makes the pleasantry — for I could name at this instant a score of honest gentlemen who might have done the very thing which Kunastrokius did, and seen no joke in it at all — as to the fail-

ing of Kunastrokius, which you say can only be imputed to his friends as a misfortune — I see nothing like a misfortune in it to any friend or relation of Kunastrokius —— that Kunastrokius upon occasion should sit with * ** *** **** and *******. ——— I have put these stars not *to hurt your worship's delicacy* — If Kunastrokius after all is too sacred a character to be even smiled at (which is all I have done), he has had better luck than his betters: in the same page (without imputation of cowardice) I have said as much of a man of twice his wisdom — and that is Solomon, of whom I have made the same remark, "That they were both great men —— and like all mortal men had each their ruling passion."

———The consolation you give me, "That my book, however, will be read enough to answer my design of raising a tax upon the public" — is very unconsolatory — to say nothing how very mortifying! By h——n! an author is worse treated than a common ***** at this rate —"*You will get a penny by your sins, and that's enough.*" — Upon this chapter let me comment. — That I proposed laying the world under contribution when I set pen to paper — is what I own, and I suppose I may be allow'd

to have that view in my head in common with every other writer, to make my labour of advantage to myself

Do you not do the same? but I beg I may add, that whatever views I had of that kind, I had other views — the first of which was, the hopes of doing the world good, by ridiculing what I thought deserving of it — or of disservice to sound learning, &c. —— how I have succeeded, my book must show — and this I leave entirely to the world — but not to that little world *of your acquaintance*, whose opinion and sentiments you call the general opinion of the best judges *without exception*, who all affirm (you say) that my book cannot be put into the hands of any woman of *character*. (I hope you except widows, doctor — for they are not *all* so squeamish, but I am told they are all really of my party, in return for some good offices done their interests in the 176th page of my second volume). But for the chaste married, and chaste unmarried part of the sex — they must not read my book! Heaven forbid the stock of chastity should be lessen'd by the Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy — yes, his Opinions — it would certainly debauch 'em! God take them under his protection in this

fiery trial, and send us plenty of Duennas to watch the workings of their humours, till they have safely got through the whole work. — If this will not be sufficient, may we have plenty of Sangrados to pour in plenty of cold water, till this terrible fermentation is over — As for the *nummum in loculo*, which you mention to me a second time, I fear you think me very poor, or in debt ——— I thank God, though I don't abound — that I have enough for a clean shirt every day — and a mutton chop — and my contentment, with this, has thus far (and I hope ever will) put me above stooping an inch for it, even for ——'s estate. — Curse on it, I like it not to that degree, nor envy (*you may be sure*) any man who kneels in the dirt for it — so that howsoever I may fall short of the ends proposed in commencing author ——— I enter this *protest*, first that my end was *honest*, and secondly, that I wrote not to be *fed*, but to be *famous*. I am much obliged to Mr. Garrick for his very favourable opinion — but why, dear Sir, had he done better in finding fault with it than in commending it? to humble me! an author is not so soon humbled as you imagine — no, but to make the book better by castrations — that is still *sub judice*, and I can assure

you upon this chapter, that the very passages and descriptions you propose that I should sacrifice in my second edition, are what are best relish'd by men of wit, and some others whom I esteem as sound critics — so that, upon the whole, I am still kept up, if not above fear, at least above despair, and have seen enough to show me the folly of an attempt of castrating my book to the prudish humours of particulars. I believe the short cut would be to publish this letter at the beginning of the third volume, as an apology for the first and second. I was sorry to find a censure upon the insincerity of some of my friends — I have no reason myself to reproach any one man — my friends have continued in the same opinions of my books which they first gave me of them — many indeed have thought better of 'em, by considering them more; few worse. I am, sir, your humble servant,

LAURENCE STERNE.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF LAURENCE STERNE *

THE letters of Sterne, which his biographers have preserved, are so few, that any addition to their number is welcome, more especially if they throw light on the character of the man, and serve to illustrate that "Shandean" philosophy of which he was the type.

For this reason I have copied and set in order, for the use of the Philobiblon Society, the following series of thirteen letters, which I have found among the MSS. collected by my Father, and which appear to have been obtained by him from a lady named Weston. The letters introduce us to a character apparently unknown to all Sterne's biographers, but intimately connected with him by a tie, of the nature of which they would appear to leave no manner of doubt.

The lady to whom they were addressed — Miss Catherine de Fourmantel — (as I learn

* [Original Preface to the letters to Miss Fourmantelle, in *Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society*, Vol. II. (London, 1855-56).]

from a memorandum in the handwriting of Mrs. Weston, who knew her,) was one of a family of French Protestant refugees, driven over to England in the reign of Louis XIV. They styled themselves Beranger de Fourmantel, and possessed estates in St. Domingo, of which they were deprived by the measures consequent on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. An elder sister, it appears, conformed to the Popish faith, returned to Paris, and was reinstated in her family property. The younger, Catherine, at the date of this correspondence, was living in York, where Sterne, as is known, held a prebendal stall. Few of the letters bear dates, so that I have been compelled to arrange them by internal evidence and casual references and allusions. The first five seem to have been written at York; the rest from London to the young lady, who, by the time we arrive at No. X.* would seem to have followed the Prebend thither, as that letter is addressed to her at a court in Soho.

Sterne came up to London in March, 1760, shortly after the publication † of the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy*, to enjoy the fame,

* [Letter XXXVII. in this edition.]

† They were published at York, December, 1759.

flattery, and invitations to dinner which the credit of that work procured him. These letters exhibit him immersed in a whirl of dissipation mental and bodily; intoxicated by the attentions paid him by peers, prelates, ministers, courtiers, and fine ladies, and reaping moreover the substantial benefit of a preferment of 160*l.* a year from a patron (Lord Fauconberg), and a purse of guineas from a bishop (Warburton).

On the subsequent fate of "dear dear Kitty" I fear I can throw no satisfactory light. Her friend Mrs. Weston asserts that Miss F. knew Sterne before his marriage; that he paid his addresses to her for five years, when, on a sudden, he married another woman; that this desertion drove her mad; that she was carried over to Paris by her elder sister, and died in a madhouse, but not before she had been visited by Sterne, who drew from her case some of the traits which he has thrown into the character of "Maria" of the "Sentimental Journey." In refutation of these statements, it will suffice to bear in mind that Sterne was married in 1740,* — twenty years before the date of this correspondence.

* [March 30, 1741.]

Perhaps the most curious letter of the whole is that which I have placed second.* It is in Sterne's hand, and evidently intended to be copied by Kitty, and to be addressed by her to some person whom he desired, through her, to influence in his favor.

JOHN MURRAY.

* [It is numbered XXIX. in this edition. The first four letters of the series belong to a period covered by 1759 and the first two months of the next year. They are brief notes that Sterne sent to Miss Fourmantelle when he came to York to visit friends or to take his turn at preaching in the minster. Miss Fourmantelle seems to be disguised in *Tristram Shandy* as "my dear, dear Jenny." — Bk. I. Ch. XVIII.]

LETTER XXV

To Miss Catherine de Fourmantelle

[York,] Sunday.

Miss, — I shall be out of all humour with you, & besides will not paint your Picture in black, which best becomes you, unless you accept of a few Bottles of Calcavillo, which I haue ordered my Man to leaue at the Dore in my Absence; — the Reason of this trifleing Present, you shall know on Tuesday night, & I half insist upon it, that you invent some plausible Excuse to be home by 7. — Yrs.

Yorick.

LETTER XXVI

To the Same

[York.]

My dear Kitty, — If this Billet catches you in Bed, you are a lazy sleepy little slut, and I am a giddy, foolish, unthinking fellow for keeping you so late up; but this Sabbath is a day of sorrow — for I shall not see my dear creature, unless you meet me at Taylor's half

an hour after twelue — but in this, do as you like. I haue ordered Matthew to turn thief and steal you a quart of Honey. What is Honey to the sweetness of thee, who are sweeter than all the Flowers it comes from. I loue you to distraction, Kitty, & will loue you to Eternity. So adieu! & believe what time only will prove me, that I am — Yrs.

LETTER XXVII

To the Same

[York,] Thursday.

My dear Kitty, — I haue sent you a Pot of Sweetmeats, and a Pot of Honey, neither of them half so sweet as yourself; but don't be vain upon this, or presume to grow sour upon this character of sweetness I giue you; for if you do, I shall send you a Pot of Pickles (by way of contrarys) to sweeten you up & bring you to yourself again. Whateuer changes happen to you, belieue me that I am unalterably yours, & according to yr motto, such a one, my dear Kitty, Qui ne changera pas, que en mourant L. S.

LETTER XXVIII

To the Same

[York.]

My dear Kitty, — I beg you will accept of the inclosed Sermon, which I do not make you a present of merely because it was wrote by myself, but because there is a beautiful Character in it, of a tender and compassionate mind in the picture giuen of* Elijah. Read it, my dear Kitty, and believe me when I assure you that I see something of the same kind & gentle disposition in your heart which I haue painted in the Prophet's, which has attach'd me so much to you & your Interests that I shall liue and dye your affectionate & faithful

Laurence Sterne.

P. S. — If possible I will see you this afternoon, before I go to Mr. Fothirgils. Adieu, dear Friend! I had the pleasure to drink y^r^ health last night.

* This Sermon was preached by Sterne in 1747.

LETTER XXIX

An Enclosure to the Same

York, Jany 1, [1760.]

S^{r}, — I DARE say you will wonder to receiue an Epistle from me, and the Subject of it will surprise you still more, because it is to tell you something about Books.

There are two Volumes just published here, which haue made a great noise, & haue had a prodigious run; for, in two days after they came out, the Bookseller sold two hundred, & continues selling them very fast. It is the Life & Opinions of Tristram Shandy, which the Author told me last night at our Concert he had sent up to London, so perhaps you have seen it; If you haue not seen it, pray get it & read it, because it has a great character as a witty smart Book, and if you think so, your good word in Town will do the Author, I am sure, great service. You must understand he is a kind & generous friend of mine, whom Providence has attach'd to me in this part of the World, where I came a stranger — & I could not think how I could make a better return, than by endeavouring to make you a Friend

to him & his performance; this is all my excuse for this Liberty, which I hope you will excuse. His name is Sterne, a Gentleman of great Preferment, & a Prebendary of the Church of York, & has a great character, in these parts, as a man of Learning & Wit; the Graver people, however, say 'tis not fit for young Ladies to read his Book, so perhaps you'l think it not fit for a young Lady to recommend it; howeuer the Nobility & Great Folks stand up mightily for it, & say 'tis a good Book, tho' a little tawdry in some places. — I am, dear Sir, y^r. most obd^t. and humble Servant.

LETTER XXX

To the Same

LONDON, Mar.* 8th, 176[0].

MY DEAR KITTY, — I HAUE arrived here safe & sound, except for the Hole in my Heart,

* [According to Murray the autograph has *May* instead of *Mar.* He adds this note:

"This date is puzzling, unless it be a slip of Sterne's pen — *May* for *March.* It is evident, from the opening sentence, that the letter was written immediately on his arrival in town. Moreover, Horace Walpole, in a letter dated April 4, 1760, states that the bargain with the booksellers, to which reference is made below, was already completed."]

which you haue made like a dear enchanting Slut as you are. I shall take Lodgings this Morning in Picadilly or the Haymarket, & before I seal this letter, will let you know where to direct a Letter to me, which Letter I shall wait for by the return of the Post with great impatience; so write, my dear Love, without fail. I haue the greatest honors paid & most civilities shewn me, that were euer known from the Great; and am engaged all ready to ten Noble Men & Men of fashion to dine. Mr. Garrick pays me all & more honour than I could look for. I dined with him to-day, & he has promised Numbers of great People to carry me to dine wth 'em. He has giuen me an Order for the Liberty of his Boxes, and of every part of his House for the whole Season; and indeed leaues nothing undone that can do me either Service or Credit; he has undertaken the management of the Booksellers, & will procure me a great price — but more of this in my next.

And now my dear, dear Girl! let me assure you of the truest friendship for you, that euer man bore towards a woman. Where euer I am, my heart is warm towards you, & euer shall be till it is cold for euer. I thank you for the kind proof you gave me of your Love,

and of yr desire to make my heart easy, in ordering yrself to be denied to you know who; — whilst I ham [*sic*] so miserable to be separated from my dear, dear Kitty, it would have stabb'd my soul to haue thought such a fellow could have the Liberty of comeing near you. I therefore take this proof of your Love & good principles most kindly, & haue as much faith & dependence upon you in it, as if I was at yr Elbow; — would to God I was at it this moment! but I am sitting solitary & alone in my bed Chamber (ten o'clock at night, after the Play), and would giue a Guinea for a squeeze of yr hand. I send my Soul perpetually out to see what you are adoing; — wish I could send my Body with it. Adieu, dear & kind girl! and belieue me euer yr kind friend & most affte Admirer. I go to the Oratorio this night. — Adieu! Adieu!

P. S. — My service to yr Mama.

Direct to me in the Pell Mell, at ye 2d House from St Alban's Street.

To Miss Formantel,
At Mrs. Joliff's, in Stone Gate,
York.

LETTER XXXI

To the Same

LONDON.

MY DEAR KITTY, — I SHOULD be most unhappy myself, and I know you would be so too, if I did not write to you this post, tho' I have not yet heard a word from you. Let me know, my sweet Lass! how you go on without me, & be very particular in euery thing.

My Lodging is euery hour full of your Great People of the first Rank, who striue who shall most honor me; — euen all the Bishops haue sent their Complim^ts^ to me, & I set out on Monday Morning to pay my Visits to them all. I am to dine w^h^ Lord Chesterfield this Week, &c. &c., and next Sunday Ld Rockingham takes me to Court. I haue snatch'd this single moment, tho' there is Company in my rooms, to tell my dear, dear, dear Kitty this, & that I am hers for ever & ever.

LAU. STERNE.

LETTER XXXII

To the Same

[LONDON.]

MY DEAR KITTY, — Tho' I haue but a moment's time to spare, I wd not omit writing you an account of my good Fortune; my Lord Fauconberg has this day giuen me a* hundred & sixty pounds a year, wch I hold with all my preferment, so that all or the most part of my sorrows and tears are going to be wiped away. I haue but one obstacle to my Happiness now left, & what that is, you know as well as I.

I long most impatiently to see my dear Kitty. Tell me, tell me what day or Week this will be. I had a purse of Guineas giuen me yesterday by a Bishop ;† all will do well in time.

From Morning to night my Lodgings, which by the by, are the genteelest in Town, are full of the greatest Company. I dined these 2 days with 2 ladies of the Bedchamber; then with

* The living of Coxwold.
† Bp. Warburton.

Ld Rockingham, Ld Edgecomb, Lord Winchelsea, Lord Littleton, a Bishop, &c., &c.

I assure you, my Kitty, that Tristram is the Fashion. Pray to God I may see my dearest Girl soon & well. — Adieu! y^r^ affectionate friend,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXXIII

To the Same

LONDON, April the 1st 176[0].

MY DEAR KITTY, — I AM truly sorry from y^r^ Account in your Letter to find you do not leaue York till the 14th, because it shortens the time I hoped to haue stole in your Company when you come. I am invited by Lord Rockingham to be one of his Suit when he goes to Windsor to be install'd Knight of the Garter with Prince Ferdinand;* So that this Honour done me, will keep me hear till the 2^d^ Week in May, when I must go down to take possession of my Preferment. These separations, my dear Kitty, howeuer grievious to us both

* Lord Rockingham and Prince Ferdinand were installed Knights of the Garter at Windsor, May 6, 1760.

— must be, for the present. God will open a Dore when we shall sometime be much more together, and enjoy our desires without fear or Interruption. I haue 14 engagements to Dine now in my Books, with the first Nobility. I haue scarse time to tell you how much I love you, my dear Kitty, & how much I pray to God that you may so liue, and so love me, as one day to share in my great good fortune. My fortunes will certainly be made; but more of this when we meet. Adieu! Write, and believe yr affte friend, L. S.

Compts to Mama.

LETTER XXXIV

To the Same

Saturday, LONDON.

MY DEAR KITTY, — I RECd your dear Letter, which gaue me much pleasure, with some pain, abt Ranalagh: but never, my dear Girl, be dejected; something else will offer & turn out, in another Quarter. Thou mayst be assured nothing in this World shall be wanting, that I can do, with Discretion. I loue you most tenderly, & you shall euer find me the

same man of Honour & Truth. Write me what night you will be in Town, that I may keep myself at liberty to fly to thee.

God bless you, my dear Kitty. — Thy faithful L. STERNE.

P. S. — There is a fine print going to be done of me, so I shall make the most of myself, & sell both inside & out. I take care of my health, but am hurried off my legs by going to great People. I am to be presented to the Prince.

My service to y^r^ Mama.

LETTER XXXV

To the Same

[LONDON.]

MY DEAR KITTY, — As I cannot propose the pleasure of your Company longer than till four o'Clock this afternoon, I haue sent you a Ticket for the Play, & hope you will go there, that I may haue the satisfaction of hopeing you are entertained when I am not. You are a most engageing Creature, and I neuer spend an Evening with you, but I leaue a fresh part of my heart behind me. You will get me all,

piece by piece, I find, before all is over; & yet I cannot think, how I can be euer more than what I am at present. — Your affectionate friend, LAURENCE STERNE.

P. S. — I will be with you soon after two o'Clock, if not at two; so get y^r^ Dinner over by then.

LETTER XXXVI

To the Same

[LONDON.]

MY DEAR KITTY, — I WAS so intent upon drinking my Tea with you this Afternoon, that I forgot I had been engaged all this Week to visit a Gentleman's Family on this day. I think I mentioned it in the beginning of the Week, but your dear Company put that with many other things out of my head: I will, howeuer, contriue to giue my dear friend a Call at 4 o'clock; tho' by the by, I think it not quite prudent: but what has prudence, my dear Girl, to do with Loue? In this I haue no gouernment, at least not half so much as I ought.

I hope my Kitty has had a good night. May all your days and nights be happy! Some time it may & will be more in my power to make them so. — Adieu!

If I am preuented calling at 4, I will call at 7.

LETTER XXXVII

To the Same

[London.]

Dear Kitty, — If it would have saued my Life, I haue not had one hour or half hour in my power since I saw you on Sunday; else my dear Kitty may be sure I should not haue been thus absent. Every minute of this day & to-morrow is pre-engaged, that I am as much a prisoner as if I was in Jayl. I beg, dear girl, you will belieue I do not spend an hour where I wish, for I wish to be with you always: but fate orders my steps, God knows how for the present. — Adieu! Adieu!

On Friday, at 2 o'Clock, I will see you.

Yrs affy.,
L. S.

To Miss Formantelle,
in Merds Court,
St Anne, Soho.

LETTER XXXVIII

To David Garrick, Esq.

Thursday, Eleven o'Clock — Night.
[London, March 6, 1760.]*

Dear Sir, — 'Twas for all the world like a cut across my finger with a sharp penknife. I saw the blood — gave it a suck, — wrapt it up — and thought no more about it.

But there is more goes to the healing of a wound than this comes to: — a wound (unless 'tis a wound not worth talking of, but by the bye mine is) must give you some pain after. — Nature will take her own way with it — it must ferment — it must digest.

The story you told me of Tristram's pretended tutor, this morning — My letter by right should have set out with this sentence, and then the simile would not have kept you a moment in suspense.

This vile story, I say — tho' I then saw both how, and where it wounded — I felt little from it at first — or, to speak more honestly

* [Month and year are not given in the edition of 1775. "*About* April, 1760," was added in 1780.]

(tho' it ruins my simile), I felt a great deal of pain from it, but affected an air usual on such accidents, of less feeling than I had.

I have now got home to my lodgings since the play (you astonished me in it) and have been unwrapping this self-same wound of mine, and shaking my head over it this half-hour.

What the devil! ——— is there no one learned blockhead throughout the many schools of misapplied science in the Christian World, to make a *tutor* of for my Tristram? — *ex quovis ligno non fit* — Are we so run out of stock, that there is no one lumber-headed, muddle-headed, mortar-headed, pudding-headed *chap* amongst our doctors? — is there no one single wight of much reading and no learning amongst the many children in my *mother's* nursery, who bid high for this charge — but I must disable my judgment by choosing a Warburton? Vengeance! have I so little concern for the honour of my hero! — Am I a wretch so void of sense, so bereft of feeling for the figure he is to make in story, that I should chuse a praeceptor to rob him of all the immortality I intended him? O! dear Mr. Garrick.

Malice is ingenious — unless where the excess of it outwits itself — I have two comforts in this

stroke of it;——the first is, that this one is partly of this kind; and secondly, that it is one of the number of those which so unfairly brought poor Yorick to his grave.—The report might draw blood of the author of Tristram Shandy—but could not harm such a man as the author of the Divine Legation—God bless him! though (by the bye, and according to the natural course of descents) the blessing should come from him to me.

Pray have you no interest, lateral or collateral, to get me introduced to his Lordship?

Why do you ask?

My dear Sir, I have no claim to such an honour, but what arises from the honour and respect which in the progress of my work, will be shewn the world I owe to so great a man.

Whilst I am talking of owing—I wish, my dear Sir, that anybody would tell you, how much I am indebted to you.—I am determined never to do it myself, or say more upon the subject than this, that I am yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXXIX

Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, to David Garrick

GROSVENOR-SQUARE, March 7, 1760.

MY DEAR SIR, — You told me no news when you mentioned a circumstance of zeal for your friends; but you gave me much pleasure by it and the inclosed, to have an impertinent story confuted the first moment I heard of it; for I cannot but be pleased to find I have no reason to change my opinion of so agreeable and so original a writer as Mr. Sterne; I mean my opinion of his moral character, of which I had received from several of my acquaintance so very advantageous an account. And I cannot see how I could have held it, had the lying tale been true, that he intended to injure one personally and entirely unknown to him. I own it would have grieved me, (and so, I believe, it would him too, when he had known me and my enemies a little better,) to have found himself in company with a crew of the most egregious blockheads that ever abused the blessing of pen and ink.

However, I pride myself in having warmly recommended "Tristram Shandy" to all the best company in town, except that at Arthur's. I was charged in a very grave assembly, as Dr. Newton can tell him, for a particular patronizer of the work; and how I acquitted myself of the imputation, the said Doctor can tell him. I say all this to show how ready I was to *do justice* to a stranger. This is all I expect from a stranger. From my friends, indeed, I expect, because I stand in need of, much *indulgence.* To them, (being without reserve,) I show my weaknesses. To strangers I have the discretion not to show them; at least, those *writing* strangers, I mentioned before, have not yet had the wit to find them out.

If Mr. Sterne will take me with all my infirmities, I shall be glad of the honour of being better known to him; and he has the additional recommendation of being your friend.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate and faithful humble servant,

W. GLOUCESTER.

LETTER XL

To Mr. Berrenger

[London, March, 1760.]

You bid me tell you all my wants. What the Devil in Hell can a fellow want now? By the Father of the Sciences (you know his name) I would give both my ears (if I was not to lose my credit by it) for no more than ten strokes of Howgarth's witty chisel, to clap at the Front of my next Edition of *Shandy*. The Vanity of a Pretty Girl in the Heyday of her Roses & Lilies is a fool to that of Author of my stamp. Oft did Swift sigh to Pope in these words: "Orna me, unite something of yours to mine, to transmit us down together hand in hand to futurity." The loosest sketch in Nature, of Trim's reading the sermon to my Father, &c., wd do the Business, and it wd mutually illustrate his System and mine. But, my dear Shandy, with what face I would hold out my lank Purse! I would shut my Eyes, & you should put in your hand and take out what you liked for it. Ignoramus! Fool! Blockhead! Symoniack! This Grace is not to be

bought with money. Perish thee and thy Gold with thee! What shall we do? I have the worst face in the world to ask a favour with, & besides, I would not propose a disagreeable thing to one I so much admire for the whole world; but you can say anything — you are an impudent, honest Dog, & can'st set a face upon a bad matter; prithee sally out to Leicester fields, & when you have knock'd at the door (for you must knock first) and art got in, begin thus: "Mr. Hogarth, I have been with my friend Shandy this morning;" but go on y^{r} own way, as I shall do mine. I esteem you, & am, my dear Mentor, Y^{rs} most Shandascally, L. STERNE.

LETTER XLI

To the Right Hon. Mr. Pitt

FRIDAY, [March 28? 1760.]

SIR, — Though I have no suspicion that the enclosed dedication* can offend you, yet I thought it my duty to take some method of letting you see it, before I presumed to beg the honour of presenting it to you next week with the *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy.*

I am, sir,
Your most humble servant,
LAU. STERNE.

* [To the second edition of the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy.*]

LETTER XLII

To S[tephen] C[roft], Esq.

[London,] May, 1760.*

Dear Sir, — I return you ten thousand thanks for the favour of your letter — and the account you give me of my wife and girl. — I saw Mr. Ch[olmle]y to-night at Ranelagh, who tells me you have inoculated my friend Bobby. — I heartily wish him well through, and hope in God all goes right.

On Monday we set out with a† grand retinue of Lord Rockingham's (in whose suite I move) for Windsor — they have contracted for fourteen hundred pounds for the dinner, to some general undertaker, of which the K[ing] has bargained to pay one-third. Lord George Sackville was last Saturday at the opera, some say with great effrontery — others with great dejection.

* [No date in the first edition.]

† Prince Ferdinand, the Marquis of Rockingham, and Earl Temple, were installed Knights of the Garter, on Tuesday, May 6, 1760, at Windsor.

I have little news to add. — There is a shilling pamphlet * wrote against Tristram. — I wish they would write a hundred such.

Mrs. Sterne says her purse is light; will you, dear Sir, be so good as to pay her ten guineas, and I will reckon with you when I have the pleasure of meeting you. — My best compliments to Mrs. C. and all friends. — Believe me, dear sir, your obliged and faithful

LAU. STERNE.

LETTER XLIII

To the Same

[LONDON,] May, 1760.†

DEAR SIR, — I this moment received the favour of your kind letter. — The letter in the Ladies Magazine ‡ about me, was written by the noted Dr. Hill § who wrote the Inspector, and undertakes that magazine — the people of York are very uncharitable to suppose any man so gross a beast as to pen such a character

* *The Clockmaker's Outcry against the Author of Tristram Shandy*, 8vo.

† [No date in the first edition.]

‡ *The Royal Female Magazine*, for April, 1760.

§ [Dr. John Hill.]

of himself. — In this great town no soul ever suspected it, for a thousand reasons — could they suppose I should be such a fool as to fall foul upon Dr. Warburton, my best friend, by representing him so weak a man — or by telling such a lie of him — as his giving me a purse, to buy off his tutorship for Tristram! — or I should be fool enough to own I had taken his purse for that purpose!

You must know there is a quarrel between Dr. Hill and Dr. M[onse]y,* who was the physician meant at Mr. Charles Stanhope's, and Dr. Hill has changed the place on purpose to give M[onse]y a lick. — Now that conversation (tho' perhaps true) yet happened at another place, and with another physician; which I have contradicted in this city for the honor of my friend M[onse]y, all which shows the absurdity of York credulity and nonsense. Besides, the account is full of falsehoods — first, with regard to the place of my birth, which was at Clonmel, in Ireland — the story of a hundred pounds to Mrs. W——,† not true, or of a *pension promised;* the merit of which I disclaim'd — and indeed there are so many other things so

* [Dr. Messenger Monsey.]

† The widow of Mr. Sterne's predecessor in the living of Coxwould.

LETTER XLV

Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, to the Rev. Mr. Sterne

PRIOR-PARK, June 15, 1760.

REVEREND SIR, — I have your favour of the 9th instant, and am glad to understand, you are got safe home, and employ'd again in your proper studies and amusements. You have it in your power to make that, which is an amusement to yourself and others, useful to both: at least, you should above all things, beware of its becoming hurtful to either, by any violations of decency and good manners; but I have already taken such repeated liberties of advising you on that head, that to say more would be needless, or perhaps unacceptable.

Whoever is, in any way, well received by the public, is sure to be annoy'd by that pest of the public, *profligate scribblers.* This is the common lot of successful adventurers; but such have often a worse evil to struggle with, I mean the over-officiousness of their indiscreet friends. There are two Odes,* as they

* Intitled, "Two Lyric Epistles: one to my Cousin Shandy, on his coming to Town; and the other to the Grown Gentlewomen, the Misses of ****." 4to.

are call'd, printed by Dodsley. Whoever was the author, he appears to be a monster of impiety and lewdness — yet, such is the malignity of the scribblers, some have given them to your friend Hall; — and others, which is still more impossible, to yourself; though the first Ode has the insolence to place you both in a mean and a ridiculous light. But this might arise from a tale equally groundless and malignant, that you had shewn them to your acquaintances in MS. before they were given to the public. Nor was their being printed by Dodsley the likeliest means of discrediting the calumny.

About this time, another, under the mask of friendship, pretended to draw your character, which was since published in a *Female Magazine* (for Dulness, who often has as great a hand as the Devil, in deforming God's work of the creation, has *made them*, it seems, *male and female*), and from thence it was transferred into a *Chronicle*.* Pray have you read it, or do you know its author?

But of all these things, I dare say Mr. Garrick, whose prudence is equal to his honesty or his talents, has remonstrated to you with the

* *The London Chronicle*, May 6, 1760.

freedom of a friend. He knows the inconstancy of what is called the Public, towards all, even the best-intentioned, of those who contribute to its pleasure or amusement. He (as every man of honour and discretion would) has availed himself of the public favour, to regulate the taste, and, in his proper station, to reform the manners of the fashionable world; while, by a well-judged œconomy, he has provided against the temptations of a mean and servile dependency on the follies and vices of the great.

In a word, be assured, there is no one more sincerely wishes your welfare and happiness, than, reverend sir,

W. G.

LETTER XLVI

To Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester

COXWOULD, June 19, 1760.

MY LORD,—This post brought me the honour of your letter, for which, and for your kind and most friendly advice, I return your Lordship all I am able—my best thanks. Be assured, my Lord, that willingly and knowingly I will give no offence to any mortal by anything which I think can look like the least violation either of decency or good manners, and yet, with all the caution of a heart void of offence or intention of giving it, I may find it very hard, in writing such a book as Tristram Shandy, to mutilate everything in it down to the prudish humour of every particular. I will, however, do my best—though laugh, my Lord, I will, and as loud as I can too.

With regard to the Lyrick Odes, all I know of them is this; that the first Ode, which places me and the author in a ridiculous light, was sent to me in a cover without a name, which, after striking out some parts, as a whimsical performance, I showed to some acquaintance;

and as Mr. Garrick had told me some time before he would write me an Ode, for a day or two I supposed it came from him. I found afterwards it was sent me from Mr. Hall; for from a nineteen years' total interruption of all correspondence with him, I had forgot his hand, which at last, when I recollected, I sent it back. The second Ode, which abounds with indecencies, is, I suppose, his too; as they are published together, there can be little doubt. He must answer for them; having nothing myself to answer for with regard to them but my extreme concern, and that a man of such great talents, as my acquaintance Mr. Hall is, should give the world so much offence. He has it greatly in his power to make amends; and if I have any penetration, and can depend upon the many assurances he gives me, your Lordship will, I hope, live to see it. He is worth reclaiming, being one of those whom nature has enabled to do much hurt or much good.

Of all the vile things wrote against me, the letter your Lordship mentions in the Female Magazine is the most inimicitious, and gave me, for that reason, the most concern; under which I had no better relief than denying the facts,

and crying out against the hardship done me by such a contexture of lies tacked together, not to serve me but to overthrow me. Such profligate wretches too often gain their end. Every mortal in town says it was wrote by a Dr. Hill, who wrote the Inspectors, and, they tell me, has the property and management of that magazine. Garrick tells me the same story, and with reasons to confirm it. These strokes in the dark, with the many kicks, cuffs, and bastinadoes I openly get on all sides of me, are beginning to make me sick of this foolish humour of mine, of sallying forth into this wide and wicked world to redress wrongs, &c. of which I shall repent as sorely as ever Sancho Panza did of his in following his evil genius of a Don Quixote through thick and thin; but as the poor fellow apologised for it, so must I: "it was my ill-fortune and my errantry, and that's all that can be said on't." Otherwise, I wish from my heart I had never set pen to paper, but continued hid in the quiet obscurity in which I had so long lived: I was quiet, for I was below envy and yet above want; and indeed so very far above it, that the idea of it never once entered my head in writing; and as I am 200*l.* a year further from the danger

of it than I was then, I think it never will; for I declare I have all I wish or want in this world, being in my calculation of money, all out, as rich as my friend Garrick, whose goodness of heart and honest cowardice in keeping *so far* out of the way of temptation, I nevertheless esteem and admire.

The Bishop of Carlisle did me the honour yesterday of a call; of whom I had the satisfaction of inquiring after your Lordship's health, and particularly how far the waters had relieved you under the pain and indigestion you complained of. He hoped your Lordship was better.

I wish your Lordship all the most grateful man can wish — happiness in this world and in the next. — I am, my Lord, with all esteem and duty, your affectionate servant,

LAU. STERNE.

LETTER XLVII

Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, to Laurence Sterne

PRIOR PARK, June 26, 1760.

REV. SIR, — I have the favour of your obliging Letter of the 19th. It gives me real pleasure (and I could not but trouble you with these two or three lines to tell you so) that you are resolved to do justice to your genius, and to borrow no aids to support it, but what are of the party of honour, virtue, and religion.

You say you will continue to laugh aloud. In good time. But one who was no more than even a man of spirit would choose to laugh in good company; where priests and virgins may be present. * * *

Do not expect your friends to pity you for the trash and ribaldry scribbled against you; they will be apter to congratulate you upon it.

Notwithstanding all your wishes for your former obscurity, which your present chagrin excites, yet a wise man cannot but choose the sunshine before the shade; indeed he would not wish to dwell in the malignant heat of the dog-days, not for the teasing and momentary

annoyance of the numberless tribes of insects abroad at that time, but for the more fatal aspect of the superior bodies.

I would recommend a maxim to you which Bishop Sherlock formerly told me Dr. Bentley recommended to him, that a man was never writ out of the reputation he had once fairly won, but by himself. — I am, &c.,

W. G.

LETTERS

LETTER XLVIII

To My Witty Widow, Mrs. F[erguson]

COXWOULD, August 3, 1760.

MADAM, — When a man's brains are as dry as a squeez'd orange —— and he feels he has no more conceit in him than a Mallet, 'tis in vain to think of sitting down, and writing a letter to a lady of your wit, unless in the honest John-Trot-Style of —— *yours of the 15th instant came safe to hand, &c.* which, by the bye, looks like a letter of business; and you know very well, from the first letter I had the honour to write to you, I am a man of no business at all. This vile plight I found my genius in was the reason I have told Mr. ——, I would not write to you till the next post — hoping by that time to get some small recruit, at least of vivacity, if not wit, to set out with; —— but upon second thoughts, thinking a bad letter in season —— to be better than a good one out of it — this scrawl is the consequence, which, if you will burn the moment you get it — I promise to send you a fine set essay in the style of your female epistolisers, cut and trim'd at all

points. — God defend me from such, who never yet knew what it was to say or write one premeditated word in my whole life — for this reason I send you this with pleasure, because wrote with the careless irregularity of an easy heart. —— Who told you, Garrick wrote the medley for Beard? — 'Twas wrote in his house, however, and before I left town. ——— I deny it — I was not lost two days before I left town. — I was lost all the time I was there, and never found till I got to this Shandy-castle of mine. — Next winter I intend to sojourn amongst you with more decorum, and will neither be lost or found anywhere.

Now I wish to God, I was at your elbow — I have just finished one volume of Shandy, and I want to read it to some one who I know can taste and relish humour — this by the way, is a little impudent in me — for I take the thing for granted, which their high mightinesses the world have yet to determine — but I mean no such thing — I could wish only to have your opinion — shall I, in truth, give you mine? — I dare not — but I will; provided you keep it to yourself — know then, that I think there is more laughable humour, —— with an equal degree of Cervantic satire — if not more than

in the last — but we are bad judges of the merit of our children.

I return you a thousand thanks for your friendly congratulations upon my habitation — and I will take care, you shall never wish me but well, for I am, Madam, with great esteem and truth, your most obliged,

L. STERNE.

P. S. — I have wrote this so vilely and so precipitately, I fear you must carry it to a decypherer ——— I beg you'll do me the honour to write — otherwise you draw *me* in, instead of Mr. —— drawing *you* into a scrape — for I should sorrow to have a *taste* of so agreeable a correspondent — and *no more.* Adieu.

LETTER XLIX

To ****

[*Circa* October, 1760?]

DEAR SIR, — I have received your kind letter of critical, and, I will add, of parental advice, which, contrary to my natural humour, set me upon looking gravely for half a day together: sometimes I concluded you had not spoke out, but had stronger grounds for your

hints and cautions than what your good-nature knew how to tell me, especially with regard to prudence, as a divine; and that you thought in your heart the vein of humour too free for the solemn colour of my coat. A meditation upon Death had been a more suitable trimming to it, I own; but then it could not have been set on by me. Mr. F[othergill],* whom I regard in the class I do you, as my best of critics and well-wishers, preaches daily to me on the same text: "Get your preferment first, Lory," he says, "and then write and welcome.' But suppose preferment is long a-coming — and, for aught I know, I may not be preferred till the resurrection of the just — and am all that time in labour, how must I bear my pains? Like pious divines? or, rather, like able philosophers, knowing that one passion is only to be combated with another? But to be serious (if I can), I will use all reasonable caution, — only with this caution along with it, not to spoil my book, that is, the air and originality of it, which must resemble the author; and I fear it is the number of these slighter touches, which make the resemblance, and identify it from all others of the same stamp, which this

* [A prebendary of York.]

understrapping virtue of prudence would oblige me to strike out. — A very able critic, and one of my colour too, who has read over Tristram, made answer, upon my saying I would consider the colour of my coat as I corrected it, that that idea in my head would render my book not worth a groat. — Still I promise to be cautious; but deny I have gone as far as Swift: he keeps a due distance from Rabelais; I keep a due distance from him. Swift has said a hundred things I durst not say, unless I was dean of St. Patrick's.

I like your caution, "Ambitiosa recides ornamenta." As I revise my book, I will shrive my conscience upon that sin, and whatever ornaments are of that kind shall be defaced without mercy. Ovid is justly censured for being "ingenii sui amator;" and it is a reasonable hint to me, as I'm not sure I am clear of it. To sport too much with your wit, or the game that wit has pointed out, is surfeiting; like toying with a man's mistress, it may be very delightful solacement to the inamorata, but little to the by-stander. Though I plead guilty to part of the charge, yet it would greatly alleviate the crime if my readers knew how much I have suppressed of this device.

I have burnt more wit than I have published, on that very account, since I began to avoid the fault, I fear, I may yet have given proofs of. — I will reconsider Slop's fall, and my too minute description of it; but, in general, I am persuaded that the happiness of the Cervantic humour arises from this very thing, — of describing silly and trifling events with the circumstantial pomp of great ones. Perhaps this is overloaded, and I can ease it. — I have a project of getting Tristram put into the hands of the Archbishop,* if he comes down this autumn, which will ease my mind of all trouble upon the topic of discretion. — I am, &c.

L. STERNE.†

* [John Gilbert, Archbishop of York.]

† [On the authenticity of this letter, consult the Introduction.]

LETTER L

To J[ohn] H[all] S[tevenson], Esq.

[York, December, 1760?] *

Literas vestras lepidissimas, mi consobrine, consobrinis meis omnibus carior, accepi die Veneris; sed posta non rediebat versus Aquilonem eo die, aliter scripsissem prout desiderabas. Nescio quid est materia cum me, sed sum fatigatus & ægrotus de meâ uxore plus quam unquam — & sum possessus cum diabolo qui pellet me in urbem — & tu es possessus cum eodem malo spiritu qui te tenet in deserto esse tentatum ancillis tuis, et perturbatum uxore tuâ — crede mihi, mi Antoni, quod isthæc non est via ad salutem sive hodiernam, sive eternam; num tu incipis cogitare de pecuniâ, quæ ut ait Sanctus Paulus, est radix omnium malorum, & non satis dicis in corde tuo, Ego Antonius de Castello Infirmo, sum jam quadraginta & plus annos natus, & explevi octavum meum lustrum, et tempus est me curare, & meipsum Antonium facere hominem felicem & liberum, et mihimet

* [No place or date in the first edition. In the edition of 1780, the letter was assigned to December 1767. For remarks on its date consult the Introduction.]

ipsi benefacere, ut exhortatur Solomon, qui dicit quòd nihil est melius in hâc vitâ, quàm quòd homo vivat festivè, & quòd edat et bibat, & bono fruatur, quia hoc est sua portio & dos in hoc mundo.

Nunc te scire vellemus, quòd non debeo esse reprehendi pro festinando eundo ad Londinum, quia Deus est testis, quòd non propero præ gloria, & pro me ostendere; nam diabolus iste qui me intravit, non est diabolus vanus, at consobrinus suus Lucifer — sed est diabolus amabundus, qui non vult sinere me esse solum; nam cúm non cumbendo cum uxore meâ, sum mentulatior quàm par est — & sum mortaliter in amore — & sum fatuus; ergo tu me, mi care Antoni, excusabis, quoniam tu fuisti in amore, & per mare & per terras invisti & festinâsti sicut diabolus, eodem te propellente diabolo. Habeo multa ad te scribere — sed scribo hanc epistolam in domo coffeatariâ & plenâ sociorum strepitosorum, qui non permittent me cogitare unam cogitationem.

Saluta amicum Panty meum, cujus literis respondebo — saluta amicos in domo Gisbrosensi, & oro, credas me vinculo consobrinitatis & amoris ad te, mi Antoni, devinctissimum,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LI

To S[tephen] C[roft], Esq.

LONDON, Christmas Day, 1760.*

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have been in such a continual hurry since the moment I arrived here — what with my books, and what with visitors and visitings, that it was not in my power sooner to sit down and acknowledge the favour of your obliging letter; and to thank you for the most friendly motives which led you to write it: I am not much in pain upon what gives my kind friends at Stillington so much on the chapter of *Noses* — because, as the principal satire throughout that part is levelled at those learned blockheads who, in all ages, have wasted their time and much learning upon points as foolish — it shifts off the idea of what you fear, to another point — and 'tis thought here very good — 'twill pass muster — I mean not with all — no no! I shall be attacked and pelted, either from cellars or garrets, write what I will — and besides, must expect to have a party against me of many

* [This date first appeared in the edition of 1780.]

hundreds — who either do not — or will not laugh. — 'Tis enough if I divide the world; — at least I will rest contented with it. — I wish you was here to see what changes of looks and political reasoning, have taken place in every company, and coffee-house since last year; we shall soon be Prussians and Anti-Prussians, B——s and Anti-B——s, and those distinctions will just do as well as Whig and Tory — and, for aught I know serve the same ends. — The King seems resolved to bring all things back to their original principles, and to stop the torrent of corruption and laziness. — He rises every morning at six to do business — rides out at eight to a minute, returns at nine to give himself up to his people. — By persisting, 'tis thought he will oblige his ministers and dependents to despatch affairs with him many hours sooner than of late — and 'tis much to be questioned whether they will not be enabled to wait upon him sooner by being freed from long levees of their own, and applications; which will in all likelihood be transferr'd from them directly to himself — the present system being to remove that phalanx of great people, which stood betwixt the throne and the subjects, and suffer them to have im-

mediate access without the intervention of a cabal — (this is the language of others): however, the King gives everything himself, knows everything, and weighs everything maturely, and then is inflexible — this puts old stagers off their game — how it will end we are all in the dark.

'Tis feared the war is quite over in Germany; never was known such havoc amongst troops — I was told yesterday by a colonel from Germany, that out of two battalions of nine hundred men, to which he belong'd, but seventy-one are left! — Prince Ferdinand has sent word, 'tis said, that he must have forty thousand men directly to take the field — and with provisions for them too, for he can but subsist them for a fortnight. — I hope this will find you all got to York — I beg my compliments to the amiable Mrs. Croft, &c., &c.

Tho' I purposed going first to Golden Square, yet Fate has thus long disposed of me — so I have never been able to set a foot towards that quarter — I am, dear sir, yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LII

To the Same

[London, January, 1761.]*

My dear Sir, — I have just time to acknowledge the favor of yours, but not to get the two prints you mention — which shall be sent you by next post — I have bought them, and lent them to Miss Gilbert, but will assuredly send for them and enclose them to you: — I will take care to get your pictures well copied, and at a moderate price. And if I can be of further use, I beseech you to employ me; and from time to time will send you an account of whatever may be worth transmitting. —— The stream now sets in strong against the German war. Loud complaints of ——† making a trade of the war, &c., &c. much expected from Lord Granby's evidence to these matters, who is expected every hour: —— the King wins every day upon the people, shews himself much at the play (but at no op-

* [No date in the first edition; "About Jan. 1761" was added in 1780.]

† [Pitt's.]

era), rides out with his brothers every morning, half an hour after seven, till nine — returns with them —— spends an hour with them at breakfast, and chat — and then sits down to business. I never dined at home once since I arrived — am fourteen dinners deep engaged just now, and fear matters will be worse with me in that point than better. —— As to the main points in view, at which you hint — all I can say is, that I see my way, and unless Old Nick throws the dice — shall, in due time, come off winner. —— Tristram will be out the twentieth — there is a great rout made about him before he enters the stage — whether this will be of use or no, I can't say — some wits of the first magnitude here, both as to wit and station, engage me success — time will shew —— Adieu, dear Sir! and with my compliments to Mrs. Croft, &c.

I am your affectionate,

and obliged

L. STERNE.

LETTER LIII

To the Same

[London, February 17? 1761.]*

Dear Sir, — Since I had the favour of your obliging letter, nothing has happened, or been said one day, which has not been contradicted the next; so having little certain to write, I have forbore writing at all, in hopes every day of something worth filling up a letter. We had the greatest expectations yesterday that ever were raised, of a pitched battle in the House of Commons, wherein Mr. Pitt was to have entered and thrown down the gauntlet, in defence of the German war. — There never was so full a house — the gallery full to the top — I was there all the day — when, lo! a political fit of the gout seized the great combatant — he entered not the lists — Beckford got up, and begged the house, as he saw not his right honourable friend there, to put off the debate † — it could not be done; so Beckford rose up, and made a most long, passionate, incoherent

* [No date in the first edition; "March, 1761," was added in 1780.]

† [This debate seems to have taken place on February 16. — *London Magazine*, Vol. XXX. 575.]

speech, in defence of the Germanic war — but very severe upon the unfrugal manner it was carried on — in which he addressed himself principally to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and laid him on terribly. —— It seems the chancery of Hanover had laid out 350,000 pounds, on account, and brought in our treasury debtor — and the grand debate was, for an honest examination of the particulars of this extravagant account, and for vouchers to authenticate it. — Legge answered Beckford very rationally, and coolly — Lord N[orth] spoke long — Sir F[rancis] Dashwood maintained the German war was most pernicious — Mr. C——, of Surrey, spoke well against the account, with some others —— L[ord] Barrington at last got up, and spoke half an hour with great plainness, and temper — explained a great many hidden springs relating to these accounts, in favour of the late King, and told two or three conversations which had passed between the King and himself, relative to these expenses — which cast great honour upon the King's character. This was with regard to the money the King had secretly furnished out of his pocket to lessen the account of the Hanover-score brought us to discharge.

Beckford and Barrington abused all who sought for peace, and joined in the cry for it; and Beckford added, that the reasons of wishing a peace now, were the same as the Peace of Utrecht — that the people behind the curtain could not both maintain the war and their places too, so were for making another sacrifice of the nation, to their own interests — After all —— the cry for a peace is so general, that it will certainly end in one. Now for myself. ———

One half of the town abuse my book as bitterly, as the other half cry it up to the skies — the best is, they abuse and buy it, and at such a rate, that we are going on with a second edition, as fast as possible.

I am going down for a day or two with Mr. Spencer, to Wimbleton; on Wednesday there is to be a grand assembly at Lady N[orthumberland]'s. I have enquired everywhere about Stephen's affair, and can hear nothing — My friend, Mr. Charles Townshend, will be now secretary of war * — he bid me wish him joy of it, though not in possession — I will ask him — and depend, my most worthy friend, that you shall not be ignorant of what I learn from him — Believe me ever, ever, yours, L. S.

* He was appointed Secretary of War the 24th of March.

LETTER LIV

To the Same

[London, March, 1761.]*

My dear Sir, — A strain which I got in my wrist by a terrible fall, prevented my acknowledging the favour of your obliging letter. I went yesterday morning to breakfast with Mr. V——, who is a kind of right-hand man to the secretary, on purpose to enquire about the propriety, or feasibility, of doing what you wish me — and he has told me an anecdote which, had you been here, would, I think, have made it wiser to have deferred speaking about the affair a month hence than now: it is this — You must know that the numbers of officers who have left their regiments in Germany, for the pleasures of the town, have been long a topic for merriment; as you see them in St. James's Coffee-house, and the Park, every hour, enquiring, open mouth, how things go on in Germany, and what news; — when they should have been there to have furnished

* [Without date in 1775; assigned to April in 1780, and in subsequent editions.]

news themselves — but the worst part has been, that many of them have left their brother officers on their duty, and in all the fatigues of it, and have come with no end but to make friends, to be put unfairly over the *heads of those* who were left risking *their lives.* — In this attempt there have been some but too successful, which has justly raised ill-blood and complaints from the officers who stayed behind — the upshot has been, that they have every soul been ordered off, and woe be to him ('tis said) who shall be found listening! Now just to mention our friend's case whilst this cry is on foot, I think would be doing more hurt than good; but if you think otherwise, I will go with all my heart, and mention it to Mr. Townshend, for to do more I am too inconsiderable a person to pretend to. —— You made me and my friends here very merry with the accounts current at York, of my being forbid the court — but they do not consider what a considerable person they make of me, when they suppose either my going, or my not going there, is a point that ever enters the King's head — and for those about him, I have the honour either to stand so personally well known to them, or to be so well repre-

sented by those of the first rank, as to fear no accident of that kind.

I thank God (B——'s excepted) I have never yet made a friend or connection I have forfeited, or done ought to forfeit — but, on the contrary, my true character is better understood, and where I had one friend last year, who did me honour, I have three now. — If my enemies knew, that by this rage of abuse and ill-will, they were effectually serving the interests both of myself, and works, they would be more quiet — but it has been the fate of my betters, who have found, that the way to fame, is like the way to heaven — through much tribulation — and till I shall have the honour to be as much maltreated as Rabelais and Swift were, I must continue humble; for I have not filled up the measure of half their *persecutions.*

The court is turning topsy-turvy. Lord Bute, le premier * — Lord Talbot, to be groom of the chambers † in room of the D. of R[utlan]d — Lord Halifax to Ireland ‡ — Sir F.

* Lord Bute was appointed Secretary of State on the 26th of March, 1761.

† Lord Talbot was appointed Steward of the Household on the same day.

‡ Lord Halifax was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on the 20th of March, 1761.

Dashwood in Talbot's place — Pitt seems unmoved — a peace inevitable — Stocks rise — the peers this moment kissing hands, &c. &c. (this week may be christened the kiss-hands week) for a hundred changes will happen in consequence of these. Pray present my compliments to Mrs. C. and all friends, and believe me, with the greatest fidelity, your ever obliged

L. STERNE.

P. S. Is it not strange that Lord Talbot should have power to remove the Duke of R[utlan]d ?

Pray, when you have read this, send the news to Mrs. Sterne.

LETTERS

LETTER LV

To J[ohn] H[all] S[tevenson], Esq.

COXWOULD, July 28, 1761.

DEAR H[ALL], — I sympathised for, or with you, on the detail you give me of your late agitations — and would willingly have taken my horse, and trotted to the oracle to have enquired into the etymology of all your sufferings, had I not been assured, that all that evacuation of bilious matter, with all that abdominal motion attending it (both which are equal to a month's purgation and exercise) will have left you better than it found you — Need one go to D——, to be told that all kind of mild (mark, I am going to talk more foolishly than your apothecary), opening, saponaceous, dirty-shirt, sud-washing liquors are proper for you, and consequently all styptical potations, death and destruction — if you had not shut up your gall-ducts by these, the glauber-salts could not have hurt — as it was, 'twas like a match to the gunpowder, by raising a fresh

combustion, as all physic does at first, so that you have been let off — nitre, brimstone, and charcoal (which is blackness itself), all at one blast — 'twas well the piece did not burst, for I think it underwent great violence, and, as it is proof, will, I hope, do much service in this militating world — Panty * is mistaken, I quarrel with no one. — There was that coxcomb of —— in the house, who lost temper with me for no reason upon earth but that I could not fall down and worship a brazen image of learning and eloquence, which he set up, to the persecution of all true believers — I sat down upon *his altar*, and whistled in the time of his divine service — and broke down his carved work, and kicked his incense pot to the D——, so he retreated, *sed non sine felle in corde suo.* — I have wrote a *clerum;* whether I shall take my doctor's degrees or no — I am much in doubt, but I trow not. — I go on with Tristram — I have bought seven hundred books at a purchase dog cheap — and many good — and I have been a week getting them set up in my best room here — why do not you transport yours to town, but

* The Reverend Mr. R[obert] L[ascelles].

I talk like a fool —— This will just catch you at your spaw —— I wish you *incolumen apud Londinum* —— Do you go there for good and all — or ill? — I am, dear Cousin, yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LVI

To the Same

COXWOULD [August],* 1761.

DEAR H[ALL], — I rejoice you are in London — rest you there in peace; here 'tis the devil. —— You was a good prophet. — I wish myself back again, as you told me I should — but not because a thin, death-doing, pestiferous, north-east wind blows in a line directly from Crazy-castle turret full upon me in this cuckoldy retreat (for I value the northeast wind and all its powers not a straw), — but the transition from rapid motion to absolute rest was too violent. — I should have walked about the streets of York ten days, as a proper medium to have passed through, before I entered upon my rest.

* [The edition of 1775 gives only 1761. In 1780 was added "*about* August."]

— I staid but a moment, and I have been here but a few, to satisfy me I have not managed my miseries like a wise man — and if God, for my consolation under them, had not poured forth the spirit of Shandeism into me, which will not suffer me to think two moments upon any grave subject, I would else, just now lie down and die — die ——— and yet, in half an hour's time, I'll lay a guinea, I shall be as merry as a monkey — and as mischievous too, and forget it all — so that this is but a copy of the present train running cross my brain. — And so you think this cursed stupid — but that, my dear H., depends much upon the quotâ horâ of your shabby clock if the pointer of it is at any quarter between ten in the morning or four in the afternoon — I give it up — or if the day is obscured by dark engendering clouds of either wet or dry weather, I am still lost — but who knows but it may be five — and the day as fine a day as ever shone upon the earth since the destruction of Sodom — and peradventure your Honour may have got a good hearty dinner to-day, and eat and drank your intellectuals into a placidulish and a blandulish amalgama — to bear nonsense, so much for that.

'Tis as cold and churlish just now, as (if God had not pleased it to be so) it ought to have been in bleak December, and therefore I am glad you are where you are, and where (I repeat it again) I wish I was also — Curse of poverty, and absence from those we love! — they are two great evils which embitter all things — and yet with the first I am not haunted much. — As to matrimony, I should be a beast to rail at it, for my wife is easy — but the world is not — and had I staid from her a second longer, it would have been a burning shame — else she declares herself happier without me — but not in anger is this declaration made — but in pure sober good-sense, built on sound experience — she hopes you will be able to strike a bargain for me before this time twelvemonth, to lead a bear round Europe: and from this hope from you, I verily believe it is, that you are so high in her favour at present — She swears you are a fellow of wit, though humorous; a funny, jolly soul, though somewhat splenetic; and (bating the love of women) as honest as *gold* — how do you like the simile? — O Lord! now are you going to Ranelagh to-night, and I am sitting, sorrowful as the prophet was, when the voice cried out to him and said,

"What dost thou here, Elijah?" — 'Tis well the spirit does not make the same at Coxwould — for unless for the few sheep left me to take care of, in this wilderness, I might as well, nay better, be at Mecca — When we find we can, by a shifting of places, run away from ourselves, what think you of a jaunt there, before we finally pay a visit to the *Vale of Jehosaphat?* — As ill a fame as we have, I trust I shall one day or other see you face to face — so tell the two colonels, if they love good company, to live righteously and soberly, as *you do*, and then they will have no doubts or dangers within or without them — present my best and warmest wishes to them, and advise the eldest to prop up his spirits, and get a rich dowager before the conclusion of the peace — why will not the advice suit both, *par nobile fratrum?*

To-morrow morning (if Heaven permit) I begin the fifth volume of Shandy — I care not a curse for the critics — I'll load my vehicle with what goods *he* sends me, and they may take 'em off my hands, or let them alone — I am very valorous — and 'tis in proportion as we retire from the world, and see it in its true dimensions, that we despise it — no bad rant!

— God above bless you! You know I am your affectionate cousin,

LAURENCE STERNE.

What few remain of the Demoniacs, greet — and write me a letter, if you are able, as foolish as this.

LETTER LVII

To Lady ——

COXWOULD, September 21, 1761.

I RETURN to my new habitation, fully determined to write as hard as can be, and thank you most cordially, my dear lady, for your letter of congratulation upon my Lord Fauconberg's having presented me with the curacy of this place — though your congratulation comes somewhat of the latest, as I have been possessed of it some time. — I hope I have been of some service to his Lordship, and he has sufficiently requited me. — 'Tis seventy guineas a year in my pocket, though worth a hundred — but it obliges me to have a curate to officiate at Sutton and Stillington. — 'Tis within a mile of his Lordship's seat and park. 'Tis a very agreeable ride out in the chaise I purchased for my wife. — Lyd has a pony which she delights in. — Whilst they take these diversions, I am scribbling away at my Tristram. These two volumes are, I think, the best. — I shall write as long as I live, 'tis, in fact, my hobby-horse:

and so much am I delighted with my uncle Toby's imaginary character, that I am become an enthusiast. — My Lydia helps to copy for me —— and my wife knits, and listens as I read her chapters. — The coronation of his Majesty (whom God preserve !) has cost me the value of an ox, which is to be roasted whole in the middle of the town, and my parishioners will, I suppose, be very merry upon the occasion.— You will then be in town — and feast your eyes with a sight, which 'tis to be hoped will not be in either of our powers to see again — for in point of age we have about twenty years the start of his Majesty. — And now, my dear friend, I must finish this — and with every wish for your happiness conclude myself your most sincere well-wisher and friend,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LVIII

To David Garrick, Esq.

[London, January, 1762.]

Dear Garrick, — Upon reviewing my finances, this morning, wth. some unforseen expences — I find I should set out with 20 p^{ds}. less — than a prudent man ought — will you lend me twenty pounds.

Y^{rs}.

L. Sterne.

LETTER LIX

To the Same

Paris, January 31, 1762.

Dear Friend, — Think not, because I have been a fortnight in this metropolis without writing to you, that therefore I have not had you and Mrs. Garrick a hundred times in my head and heart — heart! yes, yes, say you — but I must not waste paper in *badinage* this

David Garrick

post, whatever I do the next. Well! here I am, my friend, as much improved in my health, for the time, as ever your friendship could wish, or at least your faith give credit to — by the bye I am somewhat worse in my intellectuals; for my head is turned round with what I see, and the unexpected honours I have met with here. Tristram was almost as much known here as in London, at least among your men of condition and learning, and has got me introduced into so many circles ('tis *comme à Londres*). I have just now a fortnight's dinners and suppers upon my hands — my application to the Count de Choiseul goes on swimmingly, for not only M. Pelletiere (who, by the bye, sends ten thousand civilities to you and Mrs. Garrick) has undertaken my affair, but the Count de Limbourgh —— the Baron d'Holbach, has offered any security for the inoffensiveness of my behaviour in France — 'tis more, you rogue! than you will do — This Baron is one of the most learned noblemen here, the great protector of wits, and the Sçavans who are no wits — keeps open house three days a week — his house is now, as yours was to me, my own — he lives at great expence. — 'Twas an odd incident when I was introduced to the

Count de Bissie, which I was at his desire — I found him reading Tristram — this grandee does me great honours, and gives me leave to go a private way through his apartments into the Palais Royal, to view the Duke of Orleans' collections, every day I have time — I have been at the doctors of Sorbonne — I hope in a fortnight to break through, or rather from, the delights of this place, which, in the *scavoir vivre*, exceeds all the places, I believe, in this section of the globe. ———

I am going, when this letter is wrote, with Mr. Fox and Mr. Maccartny to Versailles — the next morning I wait upon Mons. Titon, in company with Mr. Maccartny, who is known to him, to deliver your commands. I have bought you the pamphlet upon theatrical, or rather tragical, declamation. —— I have bought another in verse, worth reading, and you will receive them, with what I can pick up this week, by a servant of Mr. Hodges, whom he is sending back to England.

I was last night with Mr. Fox to see Mademoiselle Clairon, in *Iphigene* — she is extremely great — would to God you had one or two like her — what a luxury, to see you with one of such powers in the same interesting

scene — but 'tis too much — Ah! Preville! thou art Mercury himself. —— By virtue of taking a couple of boxes, we have bespoke, this week, *The Frenchman in London*, in which Preville is to send us home to supper, *all happy* — I mean about fifteen or sixteen English of distinction, who are now here, and live well with each other.

I am under great obligations to Mr. Pitt, who has behaved in every respect to me like a man of good breeding, and good nature — In a post or two, I will write again — Foley is an honest soul — I could write six volumes of what has past comically in this great scene, since these last fourteen days — but more of this hereafter. — We are all going into mourning; nor you, nor Mrs. Garrick, would know me, if you met me in my *remise* — bless you both! Service to Mrs. Denis. Adieu, adieu! L. S.

LETTER LX

To Lady D——

LONDON,* February 1, 1762.

YOUR Ladyship's kind enquiries after my health are indeed kind, and of a piece with the rest of your character. Indeed I am very ill, having broke a vessel in my lungs — hard writing in the summer, together with preaching, which I have not strength for, is ever fatal to me — but I cannot avoid the latter yet, and the former is too pleasurable to be given up — I believe I shall try if the South of France will not be of service to me — his G. of Y.† has most humanely given me the permission for a year or two — I shall set off with great hopes of its efficacy, and shall write to my wife and daughter to come and join me at Paris, else my stay could not be so long — "Le Fever's story has beguiled your Ladyship of your tears," and the thought of the accusing spirit flying up to

* This letter, though dated from *London*, was evidently written at *Paris*.

† [Grace of York: Robert Hay Drummond, Archbishop of York.]

heaven's chancery with the oath, you are kind enough to say is sublime — my friend, Mr. Garrick, thinks so too, and I am most vain of his approbation — your Ladyship's opinion adds not a little to my vanity.

I wish I had time to take a little excursion to Bath, were it only to thank you for all the obliging things you say in your letter — but 'tis impossible — accept at least my warmest thanks — If I could tempt my friend Mr. H[ewit] to come to France, I should be truly happy. — If I can be of any service to you at Paris, command him who is, and ever will be, your Ladyship's faithful

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXI *

To Mrs. Sterne, York

PARIS, March 15, 1762.

MY DEAR, — Having an opportunity of writing by a physician, who is posting off for London today, I would not omit doing it, though you will possibly receive a letter (which is gone from hence last post) at the very same time. I send to Mr. Foley's every mail-day, to inquire for a letter from you; and if I do not get one in a post or two, I shall be greatly surprised and disappointed. A terrible fire happened here last night, the whole fair of St. Germain's burned to the ground in a few hours; and hundreds of unhappy people are now crying along the streets, ruined totally by it. This fair of St. Germain's is built upon a spot of ground covered and tiled, as large as the Min-

* [This letter appeared in *Notes and Queries* for March 13, 1852, with the following introductory note signed by H. A. B.: —

"I inclose a copy of an autograph letter of Sterne's written when at Paris. It is very interesting, and is not contained among his published letters. Some few words are illegible, and several of the proper names may be inaccurately copied."]

ster Yard, entirely of wood, divided into shops and formed into little streets, like a town in miniature. All the artizans in the kingdom come with their wares — jewellers, silversmiths, — and have free leave from all parts of the world to profit by a general licence from the Carnival to Easter. They compute the loss at six millions of livres, which these poor creatures have sustained, not one of which have saved a single shilling, and many fled out in their shirts, and have not only lost their goods and merchandize, but all the money they have been taking these six weeks. *Oh! ces moments de malheur sont terribles*, said my barber to me this morning; and the good-natured fellow uttered it with so moving an accent, that I could have found in my heart to have cried over the perishable and uncertain tenure of every good in this life.

I have been three mornings together to hear a celebrated pulpit orator near me, one Père Clement, who delights me much; the parish pays him 600 livres for a dozen sermons this Lent; he is K[ing] Stanislas's preacher — most excellent indeed! his matter solid, and to the purpose; his manner, more than theatrical, and greater, both in his action and delivery, than

Madame Clairon, who, you must know, is the Garrick of the stage here; he has infinite variety, and keeps up the attention by it wonderfully; his pulpit, oblong, with three seats in it, into which he occasionally casts himself; goes on, then rises, by a gradation of four steps, each of which he profits by, as his discourse inclines him; in short 'tis a stage, and the variety of his tones would make you imagine there were no less than five or six actors on it together.

I was last night at Baron de Bagg's concert; it was very fine, both music and company; and tonight I go to the Prince of Conti's. There is a Monsieur Popignière, who lives here like a sovereign prince; keeps a company of musicians always in his house, and a full set of players; and gives concerts and plays alternately to the grandees of this metropolis; he is the richest of all the farmer . . . . .; he did me the honour last night to send me an invitation to his house, while I stayed here — that is, to his music and table.

I suppose you had terrible snows in Yorkshire, from the accounts I read in the London papers. There has been no snow here, but the weather has been sharp; and was I to be all

the day in my room, I could not keep myself warm for a shilling a day. This is an expensive article to great houses here — 'tis most pleasant and most healthy firing; I shall never bear coals I fear again; and if I can get wood at Coxwold, I will always have a little. I hope Lydia is better, and not worse, and that I shall hear the same account of you. I hope my Lydia goes on with her French; I speak it fast and fluent, but incorrect both in accent and phrase; but the French tell me I speak it most surprisingly well for the time. In six weeks I shall get over all difficulties, having got over one of the worst, which is to understand whatever is said by others, which I own I found much trouble in at first.

My love to my Lyd—. I have got a colour into my face now, though I came with no more than there is in a dishclout.

I am your affectionate

L. STERNE.

For Mrs. Sterne at York.

LETTER LXII

To David Garrick, Esq.

PARIS, March 19, 1762.

DEAR GARRICK, — This will be put into your hands by Dr. Shippen, a physician, who has been here some time with Miss Poyntz, and is this moment setting off for your metropolis; so I snatch the opportunity of writing to you and my kind friend Mrs. Garrick. — I see nothing like her here, and yet I have been introduced to one half of their best Goddesses, and in a month more shall be admitted to the shrines of the other half — but I neither worship or fall (much) upon my knees before them; but, on the contrary, have converted many into Shandeism — for be it known, I Shandy it away fifty times more than I was ever wont, talk more nonsense than ever you heard me talk in your days —— and to all sorts of people. *Qui le diable est ce homme-là* — said Choiseul, t'other day — *ce Chevalier Shandy* — You'll think me as vain as a devil, was I to tell you the rest of the dialogue — whether the

bearer knows it or no, I know not — 'Twill serve up after supper, in Southampton-street, amongst other small dishes, after the fatigues of Richard the IIId. — O God! they have nothing here, which gives the nerves so smart a blow, as those great characters in the hands of Garrick! — but I forgot I am writing to the man himself —— The devil take (as he will) these transports of enthusiasm! Apropos — the whole city of Paris is *bewitch'd* with the comic opera, and if it was not for the affair of the Jesuits, which takes up one half of our talk, the comic opera would have it all — It is a tragical nuisance in all companies as it is, and was it not for some sudden starts and dashes — of Shandeism, which now and then either break the thread, or entangle it so, that the devil himself would be puzzled in winding it off — I should die a martyr — this by the way I never will ———

I send you over some of these comic operas by the bearer, with the *Sallon*, a satire — The French comedy, I seldom visit it — they act scarce anything but tragedies — and the Clairon is great, and Mad^lle^ Dumesnil, in some places, still greater than her — yet I cannot bear preaching — I fancy I got a surfeit of it in

my younger days. — There is a tragedy to be damn'd to-night — peace be with it, and the gentle brain which made it! I have ten thousand things to tell you I cannot write — I do a thousand things which cut no figure, *but in the doing* — and as in London, I have the honour of having done and said a thousand things I never did or dream'd of — and yet I dream abundantly — If the devil stood behind me in the shape of a courier, I could not write faster than I do, having five letters more to dispatch by the same Gentleman; he is going into another section of the globe, and when he has seen you, he will depart in peace.

The Duke of Orleans has suffered my portrait to be added to the number of some odd men in his collection; and a gentleman who lives with him has taken it most expressively, at full length — I purpose to obtain an etching of it, and to send it you —— your prayer for me, of *rosy health*, is heard — If I stay here for three or four months, I shall return more than reinstated. My love to Mrs. Garrick. I am, my dear Garrick, your most humble servant,

L. STERNE

LETTER LXIII

To the Same

PARIS, April 10, 1762.

MY DEAR GARRICK, — I snatch the occasion of Mr. Wilcox (the late Bishop of Rochester's son) leaving this place for England, to write to you, and I enclose it to Hall, who will put it into your hand, possibly behind the scenes. I hear no news of you, or your *empire*, I would have said *kingdom* — but here everything is hyperbolized — and if a woman is but simply pleased — 'tis *Je suis charmée* — and if she is charmed, 'tis nothing less than she is *ravi*-sh'd — and when ravi-sh'd (which may happen), there is nothing left for her but to fly to the other world for a metaphor, and swear, qu'elle étoit tout *extasiée* — which mode of speaking is, by the bye, here creeping into use, and there is scarce a woman who understands the *bon ton* but is seven times in a day in downright extasy — that is, the devil 's in her — by a small mistake of one world for the other —— Now, where am I got?

I have been these two days reading a trag-

edy, given me by a lady of talents to read, and conjecture if it would do for you — 'Tis from the plan of Diderot, and possibly half a translation of it — The Natural Son, or the Triumph of Virtue, in five acts — It has too much sentiment in it (at least for me), the speeches too long, and savour too much of *preaching* — this may be a second reason, it is not to my taste. — 'Tis all love, love, love, throughout, without much separation in the character; so I fear it would not do for your stage, and perhaps for the very reason which recommends it to a French one. — After a vile suspension of three weeks —— we are beginning with our comedies and operas again — yours I hear never flourished more — here the comic actors were never so low — the tragedians hold up their heads — in all senses. I have known *one little man* support the theatrical world, like a David Atlas, upon his shoulders, but Preville can't do half as much here, though Mad^lle^ Clairon stands by him, and sets her back to his — she is very great, however, and highly improved since you saw her — she also supports her dignity at table, and has her public day every Thursday, when she *gives to eat* (as they say here) to all that are hungry and dry.

You are much talked of here, and much expected as soon as the peace will let you — these two last days you have happened to engross the whole conversation at two great houses where I was at dinner — 'Tis the greatest problem in nature, in this meridian, that one and the same man should possess such tragic and comic powers, and in such an equilibrio, as to divide the world for which of the two Nature intended him.

Crebillion has made a convention with me, which, if he is not too lazy, will be no bad *persiflage* — as soon as I get to Toulouse he has agreed to write me an expostulatory letter upon the indecorums of T. Shandy — which is to be answered by recrimination upon the liberties in his own works — these are to be printed together — Crebillion against Sterne — Sterne against Crebillion — the copy to be sold, and the money equally divided — This is good Swiss-policy.

I am recovered greatly, and if I could spend one whole winter at Toulouse, I should be fortified, in my inner man, beyond all danger of relapsing. — A sad asthma my daughter has been martyr'd with these three winters, but mostly this last, makes it, I fear, necessary she

should try the last remedy of a warmer and softer air, so I am going this week to Versailles, to wait upon Count Choiseul to solicit passports for them — If this system takes place, they join me here — and after a month's stay we all decamp for the south of France — if not, I shall see you in June next. Mr. Fox, and Mr. Maccartny, having left Paris, I live altogether in French families — I laugh till I cry, and in the same tender moments, *cry till I laugh.* I Shandy it more than ever, and verily do believe, that by mere Shandeism, sublimated by a laughter-loving people, I fence as much against infirmities, as I do by the benefit of air and climate. Adieu, dear Garrick! present ten thousand of my best respects and wishes to and for my friend Mrs. Garrick — had she been last night upon the Tuilleries, she would have annihilated a thousand French goddesses, *in one single term.* — I am, most truly, my dear friend,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXIV

To the Earl of Fauconberg

PARIS, April 10, 1762.

MR. WILCOX, the late Bishop of Rochester's son, passing through this place in his return from Italy, has given me an opportunity of troubling your lordship with the enclosed for Lady Catherine. I did myself the honour of writing a long letter to your lordship, dated the 11th of February, from St. Germains, where I retired for a week with young Mr. Fox, but I suppose that letter never reached your lordship, because five others sent by that post have all miscarried. Thank God, there was no treason in any one of them.

By all accounts you had a most dismal foggy winter in town; had I continued there I had certainly been six weeks ago in my grave. The weather indeed has been extremely severe here, but the air clear always and elastic, and not one foggy day (which is not the case, I believe, always), so that I have been gradually regaining my health, and on

the mending hand ever since I came. This was so remarkable the first three weeks that the faculty advised me to stay where I was, and not go southwards so long as I felt I gained ground where I was. By this, together with the great civilities I have met with from the French, I have been trail'd on till now in this metropolis, where I purposed to have continued till the end of May and returned home through Holland. I am told, however, by the faculty here I shall most certainly be where I was again the next winter, if I do not give time for my lungs to strengthen by going down to Tholouse and spending one winter free from coughs and colds; after which they say they shall look upon my cure as complete. This I should not regard on my own account, but fear I shall be compelled to it on my girl's, who, my wife writes me word, and has done some time, is in a declining way with this vile asthma of hers, which these three last winters has been growing worse and worse; and that unless something more than bare medicines can be done for her, she will be lost; and that the only chance for her is to try what one winter in a warmer climate will do for her. This obliges me to wait here till they join me,

and to go down and fix them at Tholouse, where I have taken a little house with a large garden in the pleasantest part of the town, and, in case I find myself very well when I have fixed them there, shall return; if not, stay the winter through and come back in May following.

I beg pardon, my Lord, for troubling you with this long and particular account about myself and my affairs, but I thought it my duty to tell you my situation. My family, my Lord, is a very small machine, but it has many wheels in it, and I am forced too often to turn them about — not as I would — but as I can.

I could never have been in France at so critical a period as this, when two of the greatest concerns that ever affected the interest of this kingdom are upon the anvil together — the affair of the Jesuits and the war, — for much of this kingdom's future glory and welfare seems to be depending upon these two great points. The first takes up the attention of the French much more than the last, — and well it may, — for in this city alone the Society have a rent of 95,000£ a year. What must their revenues be from the whole kingdom?

It will end, I trow, like our Henry the 8th, in a general resumption.

If your lordship has not read *Le compte rendu de Constitutions de Jurists*, 'tis well worth your perusal. By this time, I suppose, it must have got to England. I hope your Lordship has had your health this winter. I wish it, as I do every other blessing to you and your family, with the zeal and truth which becomes me.

[L. STERNE.]

LETTER LXV

To Mr. Becket

PARIS, [April ?] 12, 1762.

DEAR SIR, — The Gentleman who gives you this Letter, will likewise put into yr. hands, a Play translated from one of Monsr. Diderots, by a Lady who resides here, who is a friend both to him & me — If You like it, I suppose 'twil be at yr. service, because I have recommended it to be sent to You — I have read it over & think it will not do for *our stage* — 'tis yr. business to consider whether it will do for * * * * * * *[1] — if so — the preference is given to You.

I have desired Mr. Foley, (who used to deal with D. Wilson) to send to You for whatever Books He wants or his friends in Paris or France send him Commissions to buy: — in Peace — this is sometimes considerable.

By the same Carrier who takes my Wifes Baggage from London to Dover, You may

[1] [A word here is not decipherable. It is probably *print* or *printing*, though it may be *Paris*.]

send over the underwritten Books to Mr. Foley — they are for Mon Diderot — but Mr. Foley will receive money for them & then order Mr. Selvin to pay you.

All the Works of Pope — the neatest & cheapest Edition — (therefore I suppose not Warburtons)

The Drumstick Works of Cibber — & Cibber's Life — Chaucer.

Tillotson's Sermons & the small edition. — All Lock's works.

the 6 Vols of Shandy — NB. These place to my Acct. for they are for a present to him — and all the works of (Vide Card)

These must be pack'd up in a Box and Directed to Mr. Minet & Co: at Dover, to be forwarded to Madame Morrel in Calais — they will by this means go with the Cartel Ship wch brings over my wife — send a Bill along with them directed to Mr. Foley.

Mrs Sterne will be in London at Midsummer and If you will be so good, betwixt & then to collect what is due from the Trade on my Acct. — & after paying my Printer & Stationer & yr. self — to pay what remains into Mrs Sternes hands — her Rect. will be sufficient for what money you pay her — I suppose there are 3000

disposed of by this time — so that the remainder may remain selling, — but I hope will be sold off, by the beginning of the next Year, when I shall have something ready to send, or bring with me to Town.

I wrote Mr. Edmundson a Letter last post upon this, In which I told him, In Order to settle the Acct at once, I was willing to sell the remainder of the Edition to You, with a handsome allowance for the Chances & Drawbacks on yr. side — If you have any thoughts of this — You may write me a Line by the return, what You will give per hundred & in one word I will answer You whether I will take it or no —

When Mrs Sterne is in London, send by her 3 sets of Shandys, & 3 Sets of Sermons, to be put up with her own things.

I am forced to inclose the Card itself wch We have recd from Mr. Diderot — because I have not been able to make it all out — tis the last article but one —

Mr. Follett the Gentleman who does me the favour to deliver You this — will give you two Snuff Boxes — they are of Value — in one is my Portrait, don here — & the Other full of Garnets — I beg you will pack them up some

how or other with a quire or two of paper, so as to make such a Packet, as is not likely to be lost — & send it by the first York Stage coach (with Care) — directed to Mrs Sterne in the Minster Yard. York: — I have recd Mr. Cambridge's Book safe — it was bought by Commission, so you did well to send me the Price. — My Service to all friends

I am Sr

Yr. most faithful & humb

Servt. L. STERNE.

put the inclosed
in the Penny post.

Grace all possible satisfaction

When I arrived here, the Faculty thought I could not live a month. I have lived, however, my Lord, 5 months, and in a gradual restoration of my health, so that I was setting my face towards home, when I was detain'd unhappily by the ill health of my daughter, who, at 14, is fallen into a confirmed asthma; for which she is advised to winter at Toulouse or Nice, as the only chance to save her. Whilst I was soliciting passports for her and my wife, I was unhappily myself attack'd with a fever, which has ended the worst way it could for me, in a *defluxion poitrine*, as the French physicians call it. It is generally fatal to weak lungs, so that I have lost in ten days all I have gain'd since I came here; and, from a relaxation of my lungs, have lost my voice entirely, that 'twill be much if I ever quite recover it. This evil sends me directly to Toulouse, for wch I set out from this place the moment my family arrives. The D. of Choiseul has treated me with great indulgence as to my stay in France, and has this moment sent me passports for my family to join me. I beg y^{r} Grace's pardon for the liberty in representing my situation and that of my family. Y^{r} Grace's humanity, I am sure, will

take part in my distresses, and that prompts me to lay them open. I wish yr. Grace and yr. family all health and all happiness in this world and a better.

I am, my Lord,
Yr. dutiful and ever obliged servant,
LAURENCE STERNE.

LETTER LXVII

To Mrs. Sterne, York

PARIS, May * 16, 1762.

MY DEAR, — It is a thousand to one that this reaches you before you have set out — However I take the chance —— you will receive one wrote last night, the moment you get to Mr. E. and to wish you joy of your arrival in town — to that letter which you will find in town, I have nothing to add that I can think on — for I have almost drain'd my brains dry upon the subject. — For God's sake rise early and gallop away in the cool — and always see that you have not forgot your baggage in changing post-chaises ——— You will find good tea upon the road from York to Dover — only bring a little to carry you from Calais to Paris. — give the Custom-House officers what I told you — at Calais give more, if you have much Scotch snuff — but as tobacco is good here, you had best bring a Scotch mill and make it yourself, that is, order your valet to manufacture it —

* [" May " was added in 1780.]

'twill keep him out of mischief. — I would advise you to take three days in coming up, for fear of heating yourselves. — See that they do not give you a bad vehicle, when a better is in the yard, but you will look sharp — drink small Rhenish to keep you cool, (that is if you like it). Live well, and deny yourselves nothing your hearts wish. So God in heaven prosper and go along with you — kiss my Lydia, and believe me both affectionately, — yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXVIII

To the Same

PARIS, May* 31, 1762.

MY DEAR, — There have no mails arrived here till this morning, for three posts so I expected with great impatience a letter from you and Lydia — and lo! it is arrived. You are as busy as Throp's wife, and by the time you receive this, you will be busier still — I have exhausted all my ideas about your journey, and what is needful for you to do before and during it — so I write only to tell you I am well — Mr. Colebrooks, the minister of Swisser-

*["May" was added in 1780.]

land's secretary, I got this morning to write a letter for you to the governor of the Custom-House Office, at Calais — it shall be sent you next post. — You must be cautious about Scotch snuff — take half a pound in your pocket, and make Lyd do the same. 'Tis well I bought you a chaise — there is no getting one in Paris now, but at an enormous price — for they are all sent to the army and such a one as yours we have not been able to match for forty guineas, for a friend of mine who is going from hence to Italy — the weather was never known to set in so hot, as it has done the latter end of this month, so he and his party are to get into his chaises by four in the morning, and travel till nine — and not stir out again till six; — but I hope this severe heat will abate by the time you come here — however, I beg of you once more to take special care of heating your blood in travelling and come *tout doucement*, when you find the heat too much. — I shall look impatiently for intelligence from you, and hope to hear all goes well; that you conquer all difficulties, that you have received your passport, my picture, &c. Write and tell me something of everything. I long to see you both, you may be assured, my dear wife and

child, after so long a separation —— and write me a line directly, that I may have all the notice you can give me, that I may have apartments ready and fit for you when you arrive. — For my own part I shall continue writing to you a fortnight longer — present my respects to all friends — you have bid Mr. C[roft] get my visitations at P[ocklington] done for me, &c. &c. If any offers are made about the enclosure at Rascal, they must be inclosed to me — nothing that is fairly proposed shall stand still on my score. Do all for the best, as He who guides all things will I hope do for us — so heav'n preserve you both — believe me your affectionate L. STERNE.

Love to my Lydia — I have bought her a gold watch to present to her when she comes.

LETTER LXIX

To the Same

PARIS, June 7,* 1762.

MY DEAR, — I keep my promise and write to you again — I am sorry the bureau must be open'd for the deeds — but you will see it

* ["June 7" was added in 1780.]

done — I imagine you are convinced of the necessity of bringing three hundred pounds in your pocket — if you consider, Lydia must have two slight negligees — you will want a new gown or two — as for painted linens, buy them in town, they will be more admired because English than French. — Mrs. H[ewit] writes me word that I am mistaken about buying silk cheaper at Toulouse than Paris, that she advises you to buy what you want here — where they are very beautiful and cheap, as well as blonds, gauzes, &c. — these I say will all cost you sixty guineas — and you must have them — for in this country nothing must be spared for the back — and if you dine on an onion, and lie in a garret seven stories high, you must not betray it in your cloaths, according to which you are well or ill look'd on. When we are got to Toulouse, we must begin to turn the penny, and we may (if you do not game much) live very cheap — I think that expression will divert you — and now God knows I have not a wish but for your health, comfort, and safe arrival here — write to me every other post, that I may know how you go on — you will be in raptures with your chariot. — Mr. R. a gentleman of fortune, who is going to Italy,

and has seen it, has offered me thirty guineas for my bargain. — You will wonder all the way, how I am to find room in it for a third — to ease you of this wonder, 'tis by what the coach-makers here call a cave, which is a second bottom added to that you set your feet upon, which lets the person (who sits over against you) down with his knees to your ancles, and by which you have all more room — and what is more, less heat, — because his head does not intercept the fore-glass — little or nothing — Lyd and I will enjoy this by turns; sometimes I will take a *bidet* — (a little post-horse) and scamper before — at other times I shall sit in *fresco* upon the arm-chair without doors, and one way or other will do very well. — I am under infinite obligations to Mr. Thornhill, for accommodating me thus, and so genteelly, for 'tis like making a present of it. — Mr. T[hornhill] will send you an order to receive it at Calais, — and now, my dear girls, have I forgot anything? — Adieu, adieu! — yours most affectionately, L. STERNE.

A week or ten days will enable you to see everything — and so long you must stay to rest your bones.

LETTER LXX

To the Same

PARIS, June 14, 1762.

MY DEAREST, — Having an opportunity of writing by a friend who is setting out this morning for London, I write again, in case the two last letters I have wrote this week to you should be detained by contrary winds at Calais — I have wrote to Mr. E——, by the same hand, to thank him for his kindness to you in the handsomest manner I could — and have told him, his good heart, and his wife's, have made them overlook the trouble of having you at his house, but that if he takes you apartments near him, they will have occasion still enough left to shew their friendship to us — I have begged him to assist you, and stand by you as if he was in my place, with regard to the sale of the Shandys — and then the copyright — Mark to keep these things distinct in your head — but Becket I have ever found to be a man of probity, and I dare say you will have very little trouble in finishing matters with him —— and I would rather wish you to treat with him than

with another man — but whoever buys the fifth and sixth volumes of Shandy's, must have the nay-say of the seventh and eighth. — I wish, when you come here, in case the weather is too hot to travel, you could think it pleasant to go to the Spaw for four or six weeks, where we should live for half the money we should spend in Paris — after that we should take the sweetest season of the vintage to go to the south of France — but we will put our heads together, and you shall just do as you please in this, and in everything which depends on me — for I am a being perfectly contented, when others are pleased — to bear and forbear will ever be my maxim — only I fear the heats through a journey of five hundred miles for you, and my Lydia, more than for myself. — Do not forget the watch-chains — bring a couple for a gentleman's watch likewise; we shall lie under great obligations to the Abbé M[ackarty] and must make him such a small acknowledgment; according to my way of flourishing, 'twill be a present worth a kingdom to him. — They have bad pins, and vile needles here — bring for yourself, and some for presents — as also a strong bottle-skrew, for whatever Scrub we may hire as butler, coachman, &c., to uncork us our

Frontiniac. — You will find a letter for you at the Lyon D'Argent — Send for your chaise into the court-yard, and see all is tight — Buy a chain, at Calais, strong enough not to be cut off, and let your portmanteau be tied on the fore part of your chaise for fear of a dog's trick — so God bless you both, and remember me to my Lydia. — I am yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXXI

To the Same

PARIS, June 17,* 1762.

MY DEAREST, — Probably you will receive another letter with this, by the same post — if so read this the last — It will be the last you can possibly receive at York, for I hope it will catch you just as you are upon the wing — if that should happen, I suppose in course you have executed the contents of it, in all things which relate to pecuniary matters, and when these are settled to your mind, you will have got through your last difficulty — everything else will be a step of pleasure, and by the time you have got half a dozen stages, you will set

* ["17" was added in 1780.]

up your pipes and sing Te Deum together, as you whisk it along. — Desire Mr. C[roft] to send me a proper letter of attorney by you, he will receive it back by return of post. You have done everything well with regard to our Sutton and Stillington affairs, and left things in the best channel — if I was not sure you must have long since got my picture, garnets, &c., I would write and scold Mr. T—— * abominably — he put them in Becket's hands to be forwarded by the stage coach to you, as soon as he got to town. — I long to hear from you, and that all my letters and things are come safe to you, and then you will say that I have not been a bad lad — for you will find that I have been writing continually, as I wished you to do. — Bring your silver coffee-pot, 'twill serve both to give water, lemonade, and orjead — to say nothing of coffee and chocolate, which, by the bye, is both cheap and good at Toulouse, like other things. — I had like to have forgot a most necessary thing, there are no copper tea-kettles to be had in France, and we shall find such a thing the most comfortable utensil in the house — buy a good strong one, which will hold two

* [Presumably Mr. Thornhill or Mr. Tollot. But in Letter LXV the name is given as Mr. Follett, which may be Sterne's slip for Mr. Tollot.]

quarts — a dish of tea will be of comfort to us in our journey south —— I have a bronze tea-pot, which we will carry also — as china cannot be brought over from England, we must make up a villainous party-coloured tea equipage, to regale ourselves, and our English friends, whilst we are at Toulouse — I hope you have got your bill from Becket. — There is a good-natured kind of a trader I have just heard of, at Mr. Foley's, who they think will be coming off from England to France, with horses, the latter end of June. He happened to come over with a lady, who is sister to Mr. Foley's partner, and I have got her to write a letter to him in London, this post, to beg he will seek you at Mr. E——'s, and, in case a cartel ship does not go off before he goes, to take you under his care. He was infinitely friendly, in the same office, last year, to the lady who now writes to him, and nursed her on ship-board, and defended her by land with great good-will. — Do not say I forgot you, or whatever can be conducive to your ease of mind, in this journey — I wish I was with you, to do these offices myself, and to strew roses on your way — but I shall have time and occasion to shew you I am not wanting — Now, my dears, once more pluck

up your spirits — trust in God — in me — and in yourselves — with this, was you put to it, you would encounter all these difficulties ten times told — Write instantly, and tell me you triumph over all fears; tell me Lydia is better, and a helpmate to you — You say she grows like me — let her shew me she does so in her contempt of small dangers, and fighting against the apprehensions of them, which is better still. As I will not have F.'s share of the books, you will inform him so — Give my love to Mr. Fothergill, and to those true friends which Envy has spared me — and for the rest, *laissez passer* — You will find I speak French tolerably — but I only wish to be understood. — You will soon speak better; a month's play with a French Demoiselle will make Lyd chatter it like a magpye. Mrs. —— understood not a word of it, when she got here, and writes me word she begins to prate apace — you will do the same in a fortnight — Dear Bess, I have a thousand wishes, but have a hope for every one of them — You shall chant the same *jubilate*, my dears, so God bless you. My duty to Lydia, which implies my love too. Adieu, believe me

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

Memorandum: Bring watch-chains, tea-kettle, knives, cookery-book, &c.

You will smile at this last article — so adieu — At Dover, the Cross Keys; at Calais at the Lyon D'Argent—the master a Turk in grain.

LETTERS

LETTER LXXII

To Lady D——

PARIS, July 9, 1762.

I WILL not send your ladyship the trifles you bid me purchase without a line. I am very well pleased with Paris — indeed I meet with so many civilities amongst the people here that I must sing their praises — the French have a great deal of urbanity in their composition, and to stay a little time amongst them will be agreeable. — I splutter French so as to be understood — but I have had a droll adventure here in which my Latin was of some service to me — I had hired a chaise and a horse to go about seven miles into the country, but, *Shandean like*, did not take notice that the horse was almost dead when I took him — Before I got halfway, the poor animal dropp'd down dead — so I was forced to appear before the Police, and began to tell my story in French, which was, that the poor beast had to do with a worse beast than himself, namely *his master*, who had driven him all the day before (Jehulike) and that he had

neither had corn, or hay, therefore I was not to pay for the horse — but I might as well have whistled, as have spoke French, and I believe my Latin was equal to my uncle Toby's Lilabulero — being not understood because of it's purity, but by dint of words I forced my judge to do me justice — no common thing by the way in France. — My wife and daughter are arrived —— the latter does nothing but look out of the window, and complain of the torment of being frizzled. — I wish she may ever remain a child of Nature — I hate children of art.

I hope this will find your ladyship well — and that you will be kind enough to direct to me at Toulouse, which place I shall set out for very soon. I am, with truth and sincerity, Your Ladyship's Most faithful,

L. STERNE.

LETTERS

LETTER LXXIII

*To Mr. E.**

PARIS, July 12, 1762.

DEAR SIR, — My wife and daughter arrived here safe and sound on Thursday, and are in high raptures with the speed and pleasantness of their journey, and particularly of all they see and meet with here. But in their journey from York to Paris, nothing has given them a more sensible and lasting pleasure, than the marks of kindness they received from you and Mrs. E. — The friendship, good-will and politeness of my two friends I never doubted to me, or mine, and I return you both all a grateful man is capable of, which is merely my thanks. I have taken, however the liberty of sending an Indian taffety, which Mrs. E. must do me the honour to wear for my wife's sake, who would have got it made up, but that Mr. Stanhope, the Consul of Algiers, who sets off tomorrow morning for London, has been so kind (I mean his lady) as to take charge of it; and

* [Perhaps the Mr. Edmundson mentioned in Letter LXV.]

we had but just time to procure it: and had we missd that opportunity, as we should have been obliged to have left it behind us at Paris, we knew not when or how to get it to our friend. — I wish it had been better worth a paragraph. If there is anything we can buy or procure for you here (intelligence included) you have a right to command me — for I am yours, with my wife and girl's kind love to you and Mrs. E.

LAU. STERNE.